

## General Introduction to Sangharakshita's Seminars

### Hidden Treasure

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Sangharakshita's Literary Executors and the Adhithana Dharma Team*

**The Mangala Sutta seminar, held at Broomhouse Farm in May 1976**  
**Originally Published in this edited form with the title *Auspicious Signs***

Edited by Ugyen Sangharakshita (then known as \_The Venerable Sangharakshita\_)  
Words or phrases within square brackets are explanatory additions  
by Sangharakshita.

**Note for this, third, edition:**

{Please note that the diacritical marks have been copied onto this typescript from the handwritten ones inserted into the second edition and may not be one hundred percent accurate. If this work is to be used as the basis for any future published, scholarly, work, please check the diacritics with a Pali and Sanskrit dictionary. }

Auspicious Signs by The Venerable Sangharakshita  
\_The Venerable Sangharakshita, 1979

Those present: The Venerable Sangharakshita, Lokamitra, Sagaramati, Richard Hutton, Gary Hennessey, Graham Stevens, and Mark Barrett.

**Sangharakshita:** First of all, about the title. Hare [*Woven Cadences of Early Buddhists. Oxford University Press, London, (reprinted) 1947. p.40*] translates the \_mangala\_ in Mangala Sutta as \_Luck\_, indeed as \_The Greatest Luck\_, and Woodward [*Some Sayings of the Buddha. Oxford University Press, London, 1973 p.39*] translates it as \_Blessings\_. So why do you think there is this difference between the two versions? What **is** a mangala, really? I myself, when translating this particular sutta, have translated mangala as \_auspicious sign\_, which I think gets much nearer to the real meaning of the word. Mangala is not only \_auspicious sign\_, however, but also an \_auspicious performance\_ in the sense of a good luck ceremony. In ancient India they had all sorts of beliefs, and even practices, that we would regard as superstitious. For instance, if you saw a certain kind of bird flying in the sky it was a sign of good luck, whereas if you saw a certain other kind of bird it was a sign of bad luck. Thus the good bird, or rather the bird that meant good luck, was a mangala. It was an auspicious thing, an auspicious sign. If you saw that bird you knew that something good would follow, Similarly, if you performed the auspicious ceremony, the auspicious rite, you would know that something good would follow. Do you get the idea? A mangala is an auspicious sign in the sense that it indicates something good coming along. In the Mangala Sutta it\_s as though the Buddha takes up this idea and asks, in effect, What is the **real** auspicious sign? What is the sign that you must **really** look out for? What is the sign that will **really** assure you that something good is coming? And the answer is, it\_s your own skilful action. That\_s the best auspicious sign, because if you perform a skilful action you know quite certainly that, in the future, some happiness will accrue to you, some progress and development, even Nirvana. So the good deed is the best auspicious sign, the good deed is the greatest luck. This is what, in effect, the Buddha is saying in this particular sutta. We find in fact throughout in the Pali Canon that this kind of attitude is typical of what, so far as we can make out, is the teaching of the actual historical Buddha. He tried very hard to give existing beliefs, practices, customs and traditions a positive twist, as it were. He didn\_t condemn outright all those \_auspicious performances\_, all those good luck ceremonies and good luck signs. He said, Look out for the real sign of good luck, perform the real auspicious ceremony and so on, which is the good action which you yourself perform. If you perform that, then you can be really certain that happiness and progress and individual development will follow. Do you see the idea? It\_s this idea that the Buddha is enlarging upon the Mangala Sutta. There\_s a sort of sequence in it, you\_ll notice, a sort of cumulative development. He proceeds from very simple and ordinary things to quite advanced states

and levels - even though both language and method of treatment remain very simple indeed. Whether the Buddha Himself actually spoke this sutta, in these very words, we can't really know at this time, after 2,500 years; *but we are pretty certain* that these are the kind of ethical and spiritual principles the Buddha did insist upon. Maybe one of the disciples put them together in this sort of *\_ballad\_* form. Or maybe not. Maybe the Buddha himself summarized His own teaching in his own words in this way and spoke these verses in this very form. We don't know. But certainly the eleven verses of the Mangala Sutta proper do represent the substance of His teaching - simple, straightforward teaching - to and for ordinary people, put in this very concise and simple way.

First let's go through the prose introduction.

*Thus have I heard: Once, when the Master was dwelling near  
S1vatthi in Anathapindika's park at Jeta Grove,...*

**S:** S1vatthi was the capital city of the kingdom of Kosala, which was one of the two leading kingdoms of North India in the Buddha's day. (There's an interesting description of the Indian *\_middle country\_* and of the commercial, cultural and political importance of S1vatthi in the *6th century B.C. in Trevor Ling's The Buddha*, which I've been reading recently.) Jeta Grove was situated outside the city, at a convenient distance, and had been acquired by the merchant Anathapindika for the use of the Buddha. [After acquiring the property from Prince Jeta by covering the area with gold coins Anathapindika put up what we **mustn't** call monasteries but, rather, rest houses for the monks - though we shouldn't really call them monks: they were the Buddha's full-time followers - and the Buddha Himself spent altogether twenty-six rainy seasons there, staying either at Jeta Grove itself, which was situated to the south of S1vatthi, or at East Park, which was situated to the East of the city and had been acquired for His use by the well-to-do lay patroness Vis1kh1. So far as we can see, S1vatthi was the Buddha's *\_headquarters\_*. He spent more time there, and seems to have given more teaching there, than in any other single place. It's therefore not surprising, in a way, that this particular sutta should have been given there rather than elsewhere.]

According to Buddhaghosa's account, when the Buddha was *\_in residence\_* anywhere, [as distinct from wandering from place to place] He used to divide His day into five periods, going in quest of almsfood in the morning, assigning the bhikkhus topics for meditation in the afternoon, and so on. During the second of the three watches of the night He would lie awake, and during this period devas and other spiritual beings would visit Him, and He'd give teaching to them in the same way that He gave teaching to human beings during the daytime. We therefore find the text saying, in continuation:

*..... a dev2 of surpassing beauty, lighting up the whole of the Jeta Grove,  
approached him, as night waned;.....*

**S:** The actual text says devat1, a word which is only grammatically feminine and means a divinity. Perhaps it was the fact that the devat1 was *\_of surpassing beauty\_* that misled the translator.[Laughter] [Perhaps he thought that only someone of the female sex could be described in such terms.] Be that as it may, the divinity *\_lighting up the whole of Jeta Grove, approached him [i.e. the Buddha] ,\_as night waned\_*. In other words, he approached Him just before dawn. It's a very mysterious sort of time, you know, just before dawn. It's neither light nor dark. There's a faint glow in the sky, and a very definite sort of atmosphere: according to Buddhist tradition it was at this particular time that non-human beings - or superhuman beings - used to approach the Buddha.

*.. and drawing near she saluted and stood at one side. Thus standing she spoke*

*this verse to the Master: Devas and many men have thought  
On luck, in hope of happiness:  
Tell me the greatest luck\_*

**S:** If you don't know much about the law of cause and effect, or law of conditionality, you're very dependent upon good luck, on signs. Primitive man didn't have a very scientific understanding of things. He didn't always understand why certain things happened. For instance, primitive man saw that the sun rose every morning. But did he know why the sun rose every morning? No, he didn't. Perhaps he thought he did. Some primitive men might have noticed that the cock crew every morning. So they thought it was the crowing of the cock that **caused** the sun to rise. Why? The cock crew, then the sun rose: it was obvious. Primitive men would tend to think like that. It was the old logical fallacy of subsequent to, therefore because of. There were many sequences. of this sort, and a lot of things that we think of as superstitious are in fact observed sequences that are not really cause-effect sequences; but the primitive mind - or at least primitive man - thinks of them as such. He is therefore always on the lookout for things that will tell him that certain other things can be expected, as in the traditional verse Red sky at night, shepherd's delight. Red sky in the morning, shepherd's warning. More specifically, he is always on the lookout for signs, indications, hints, from nature or other sources - that something **good** is coming to him - is on its way. He's always on the lookout for good luck signs. In this country, even today, when a black cat crosses your path it's a good luck sign - you know that good luck is going to come. Among the Nepalese it's just the opposite: if a black cat crosses your path it's a sign of bad luck. [Laughter] In Hindu India it's bad luck to meet a widow, because a widow is a figure of disaster, of ill omen. She's lost her husband, so she's just a widow, just a nobody. In losing her husband she's lost everything. She's in a very miserable state, and if she's an orthodox Hindu she's got a shaven head and wears plain white garments. Unless she can devote herself to the spiritual life she's certainly not a very happy person. So to meet a widow is a sign of ill omen. To meet a woman of bad character is also considered very ominous. In Kalimpong there was a woman - a local Tibetan, born in Darjeeling - who was very, very notorious, having been married no less than thirty-seven *times, besides numerous affairs - all mixed up with shady business and financial transactions*, and transfers of property, jewellery, etc. She had such a bad reputation, such a bad name in the Kalimpong bazaar, that if a merchant met her in the street in the morning he wouldn't do any business that day. She was regarded as such a bad omen on account of her bad character.

The devat1 is therefore saying that many devas and men have thought / On luck, in hope of happiness. They want to know how to tell when happiness is coming. Gods are no better than men in this respect. Both are equally ignorant, equally unenlightened. What signs - what auspicious signs- are they to look out for? What auspicious performances should they engage in, so that they can know - so that they can be sure - that happiness is coming? As I've already said, primitive man just didn't know how things worked. To him it seemed very much a matter of luck, or the simple association of one thing with another. For instance, at one time there might be a terrible epidemic, at another time no epidemic. **Why** there should be an epidemic at one time and not at another he just didn't know. But he wanted to know. How can we know that we're not going to have an epidemic this year? Or a famine? Or a drought? So they'd look out for signs. Some of the signs they observed might, in fact, be causally connected with the phenomenon in question, but others might be completely fortuitous. Primitive man's attitude was scientific, but not his method. The devat1 is therefore saying that people want to be happy. They want to feel, they want to know, that happiness is coming, that happiness is on its way. Consequently they're looking out for the signs that will tell them this, assure them of this. Please tell us these signs - this is what the devat1 is saying. Please let us know what we've to look out for, so that we may be sure that happiness is coming. Because everyone wants to be happy. Everyone wants to feel that they are going to be happy - that something good is coming, not something bad. So what does the Buddha say? With a smile, as it were, He says Serving the wise, not serving fools... It's not just

servicing, it's associating. If you're associating with the wise, and not associating with fools, then happiness is on its way. [Laughter] The Buddha at once indicates an ethical-cum-spiritual - or even a common sense - sort of sequence rather than a 'superstitious' one. He answers the question very much in ethical and practical terms, not in pseudo-scientific or magical terms. What does the other translation say?

*Not to follow after fools, but to follow after the wise...*

'Follow' is also good. *Sevanā* means to associate with, to follow, to serve: in India they don't separate these ideas. You associate with someone., especially with a teacher or elder, you serve him [i.e. wait upon him, and attend to his personal needs], and you follow him [i.e. accept his teaching and put into practice]. Associating with, serving, following, are cognate ideas, and all are expressed by the term *sevanā*. So to associate with, or to serve, or to follow, the wise, and not associate with, not serve, not follow, the foolish, is a good luck sign. If you're doing the one, and not doing the other, you can be sure that good luck, that happiness, is on its way. The word for 'the wise' here is *pandita*. In later Indian literature *pandita* acquires the slightly derogatory meaning of the mere scholar; but it doesn't bear that meaning in Pali; in Pali it signifies a wise man. In the *Dhammapada* there's a *Panditavagga*, a section or chapter on 'The Fool', and in the *Dhammapada* one gets the same contrast between the *pandita* or wise man and the *bhīla* or fool that one gets in the Mangala Sutta. In my own (unfinished) translation of the *Dhammapada* I render *bhīla* as 'spiritually immature'. The *bhīla* is the young, immature, foolish person. In Pali and Sanskrit these two things were associated: the young, the immature, and the foolish. The fool is simply the man who's not grown up yet. He's not matured. He's not wise. The *pandita*, as the opposite of the *bhīla*, is therefore not just the wise man but the spiritually mature person. So if you follow after, associate with, and serve, the wise man - the spiritually mature person - then you can look for happiness in the future. But if you associate with, if you follow, if you serve, the fool - the spiritually immature person - then you can only look for suffering. In the *Dhammapada* there is a definition of the fool. Do any of you remember it? What is the spiritually immature person? How are you to recognize him? The spiritually immature person says, *Putta m'atthi, dhanam m'atthi. These sons are mine, this wealth is mine, iti bhīlo viha\_\_ati - thus the fool torments himself*. In other words the foolish person is the egoistic person, the self-centred person, the person who grasps at things thinking that they are his own. This is the essence of being spiritually immature, being a fool. The fool is one in whom the I-sense and mine- sense is strong. 'Fool' doesn't mean simply the country bumpkin. It doesn't mean the non-educated or unintelligent person. A fool in **this** sense [i.e. the Buddhist sense] can be **highly** intelligent, **highly** intellectual - but spiritually speaking he's a fool, he's a spiritually immature person, a *bhīla*, because his 'I'-sense is strong and he thinks in terms of 'me' and 'mine'. Conversely the wise man, the spiritually mature person, is the man who doesn't think or feel in that way. He is the one who doesn't have a strong 'I'-sense, who doesn't grasp at things thinking 'These are mine'.

**Graham:** Could this, maybe, go back to Chintamani's new article about the will - that it's very much the will that people function with. They keep the will rather than giving [themselves] up to the path.

**S:** Yes, the spiritually immature person is the willful person rather than the powerful person. The wise man, the *pandita*, is the spiritually power-full person, whereas the fool, the *bhīla*, is the willful person, the person motivated by egoistic will. It's interesting that the Buddha puts this particular mangala right at the beginning, as this means that he is also emphasising the importance of Kalyāna mitrata or spiritual fellowship, because the real spiritual fellowship is with the wise. You can't have spiritual fellowship with a fool, with a spiritually immature person: it's impossible. The Buddha is therefore

putting *'serving the wise, not serving fools'* right at the beginning of His enumeration of the signs of good luck, or the auspicious signs. He gives Kalyāna mitrata the first place.

**Mark:** Forming a basis for all the others, presumably.

**Richard:** It seems to me that those auspicious signs, those signs of luck, are chancy. The Buddha's saying, 'This is auspicious', but one gets the impression that this is what you ought to be **doing**.

**S:** Yes, it is. It's not only an auspicious sign, it's an auspicious **performance**, that is required. You **provide** the sign, you **create** the sign, you **make the sign for yourself**. That's the Buddha's original twist, as it were: [that one should be] not just passively waiting for the sign but creating the sign. To believe in signs and omens [in the ordinary way] tends to create a rather passive attitude, such as you in fact find in India; but this is quite opposed to the Buddha's attitude - the attitude that you should create the signs for yourself and, in that way, bring about your own so-called 'good luck' in the future. In India people really do rely upon auspicious signs. If you go to the bazaar you will find men sitting there with little birds in cages. This is for fortune-telling. Lots of people get their fortune told every time they go to the bazaar, which may be every day. A few grains of rice are scattered inside one of the cages, and according to the way in which the little birds peck at them the fortune-teller will predict your luck for the day or for the week. You will also find palmists and astrologers in the bazaar. Whatever the method, lots of people just stop for a few minutes and get their fortune told, because then they'll know what to do, or what to expect, in the course of the day. They tend to have this very passive sort of attitude. Moreover there are various almanacs telling you which are good luck days and which are bad luck days. Even the Tibetans have this sort of thing, but more as an inheritance from ancient Indian and Chinese belief and practice than as anything to do with Buddhism. The Buddha's attitude is not to encourage you to just sit around waiting for good luck signs or looking out for good luck signs. Rather, He encourages you to create your own good luck signs by your own auspicious performances - in other words, by your own skilful actions of body, speech and mind. Then you can be **really sure** that happiness is going to follow. In this way the Buddha gives an 'activist' twist to the whole thing.

**Richard:** I must admit that, sometimes, when I pick up a paper and look at the stars, and see that I've got a good day or a good week ahead, I really feel sort of secure. I really feel, 'Cor, that's good, that.'

**S:** Well that's all right **provided** that if you find a bad prediction you don't let it upset or discourage you. Believe it when it's good, ignore it when it's bad! *Or, if it's bad, be all the more determined, and say, 'The stars don't determine everything. I'll just prove the stars wrong!' Or, if the prediction is good, say, 'If the stars help, so much the better, but even if they don't, never mind!'*

**Sagaramati:** Going back to what you said about being passive, and relating that to the sense of 'I', I usually see three levels. Some people, I find, can be passive in the sense that certain things happen to them. This might be annoying to certain other people, on account of the 'I' sense, but it doesn't annoy **them**, because of their [natural] passivity. I don't know whether that's a good thing [in that it indicates a lack of 'I'-sense] or wheth...

**S:** What the Buddha was against was passivity in respect of the good: the good is something you have to bring into existence in your own life [through your own efforts.] When you're meditating you are, in a sense, passive, but by your actual practice of meditation - by the fact that you've at least sat down, at least folded your hands, at least closed your eyes - you've brought yourself into a state or condition where you can be [not inactive] but passive in the sense of opening yourself up to, being receptive to, higher spiritual influences. You're not completely passive the whole way through.

**Sagaramati:** What I meant was that the passivity can appear to have not so much of an I sense. I'm thinking of certain people I know...

**S:** Like the Indians I mentioned, who go to the bazaar and have their fortune told, and are very dependent upon what they hear. In a way they\_re passive, but it\_s not that they don\_t have egos.

**Sagaramati:** No, it\_s things that happen to people, as when they experience disappointments, or have things stolen. It\_s almost like they don\_t care, in a sense, but the feeling one gets off them is very passive and cowl-like. In such cases you don\_t know whether that state\_s a skilful state or whether perhaps, it wouldn\_t be a step up for them to actually say something [by way of protest], or even do something, from more of an I sense.

**S:** Very often such people are merely blocked, which is quite a different thing [from being passive in the positive sense]. As regards people in India, many of the Indians - many of the Hindus - have got this cowl-like passivity, this lack of initiative. Yet it was these same people who, during the Hindu-Muslim riots, were slaughtering the Muslims, and some of my friends - including Hindu friends - who witnessed the riots said that it was amazing to see the way these people were transformed, and became so violent and bloodthirsty, when things that they were sensitive about - that is, their religion in the communal sense - were touched. When they felt really threatened, then they reacted with real violence. So the ego, the I sense is there, underneath, even in the cowl-like, passive sort of person. They\_re not really calm, they\_re not really gentle. They\_re either blocked or just slothful or dull. But they can be aroused, and sometimes in a very extreme way, as was shown during these communal riots. [Pause]. So I think it\_s important to distinguish genuine calm from that sort of negative passivity.

**Lokamitra:** It\_s often a blocked fear, I think. I've noticed this with one or two people at the Centre. There is very definitely a blocked energy - sort of not wanting to admit something, not wanting to confront something. And often it really is blocked: they\_re just not aware of this emotion in them.

**Sagaramati:** It often goes, you know, by the view of being a spiritual practice, and people say that they\_re very detached and sort of unegoistical and things like that. But sometimes, I don\_t know how it is, you just feel there\_s something there that\_s not quite right.

**S:** Well, as I said, it\_s not so much that they\_re non-attached: they\_re just blocked. During the time I was at Sukhavati there were at least two people there who seemed very quiet at the time of my arrival but who started coming out of themselves a bit after a while. One of them ended up by expressing, even, a certain amount of aggressiveness, which didn\_t seem to be there at the beginning at all. But that did seem to be an improvement. [Pause] So passivity, to be genuine, just mustn\_t be this sort of blocked state, or inert state... much less still a state of bovine stupidity. It\_s like the cat, you know. The cat might appear to be very gentle and contented, purring away on the hearthrug, but just pull his tail and he can turn on you and give you a really nasty scratch: it\_s all there. Sometimes you find this with women. So long as they've got all the things they want - home, husband, and so on - they appear very contented, very docile and peaceable. But just you suggest taking away any of those things, and the woman can become an absolute wildcat, ready to tear your eyes out. Pseudo-passivity of this kind must be distinguished from the real thing.

After associating with and following the wise, and not associating with and following fools, the Buddha speaks of;

*The worship of the worshipful...*

Here there is a difficulty in translation. The word *p3ja*, which we translate as *\_worship\_*, has got a much wider connotation in Pali and Sanskrit. It\_s not only worship in the specifically religious sense but also *\_paying respect\_*, *\_reverencing\_*, or *\_revering\_*. For us worship is exclusively religious, though there is a slight suggestion otherwise in expressions like *\_His Worship the Mayor\_*. Etymologically speaking, worship is *\_worship\_*, which as a verb means to ascribe worth or value to something, or to treat it as possessing worth or value. This is what worship or worthship really is. It hasn\_t got a narrowly religious connotation.

**Mark:** People in the West seem not so much to want to acknowledge that anybody is worth praise - other than God, I suppose.

**S:** Except that they don\_t believe in God, so that doesn\_t leave anybody. [Laughter]

**Richard:** People aren\_t open to the idea that there\_s somebody better than them, let\_s say in a spiritual sense. In the West we\_re all brought up democratic. Everybody\_s equal. Everybody\_s the same.

**S:** Nobody has more worth than you have yourself.

**Richard:** Often I should think, it would be quite a treat when somebody comes along who is worthier than you are.

**S:** But what about the phenomenon of, say, pop stars or famous footballers [who receive an enormous amount of adulation] What is happening there? Is it a case of people ascribing worth to them in the present sense, or what is it?

**Graham:** It is almost at that level, I feel. [Murmurs of agreement].

**Sagaramati:** Well, that\_s certainly energy...

**S:** What is it, then? What is happening there? Is it a genuine worship, an ascribing of worth - or is it some thing else?

**Richard:** I think often it\_s a projection. It\_s really wanting to be like that person - you know, really wanting to be what you **think** that person is. Because often you can think of what a pop star is and think he\_s got this sort of perfect life [that you imagine]. But he\_s probably not like that at all. So I don\_t think that\_s really the same thing [as genuine worship].

**S:** He\_s like that [i.e. like what you think he is] simply, for your benefit - and his own benefit too in other ways. There\_s some truth in that statement of yours, that this is projective. The ascribing of worth in the genuine sense, therefore is **not** a matter of projecting: This is what it means. When you genuinely ascribe worth to someone you\_re not just projecting onto them. You\_re really seeing them as what they are and seeing them, in a word, as better than you; and this is a genuine sight, or insight. You\_re not merely projecting any unrealised potential, any unfulfilled wish, of yours onto them. That is the difference, I think. So you\_re not really *\_worshipping\_* the pop idol or the footballer; you\_re not really ascribing worth to them: [you can\_t, because] you don\_t **see** them. They have no worth really, in themselves, for you. They\_re just a sort of hook for your own projections.



**Richard:** It just suddenly occurred to me - the difference between Buddhist worship and worship in a theistic sense! *Maybe worship in a theistic sense is one massive projection. In the case of worship in the Buddhist sense, on the other hand, you're saying, 'Look at all these [wonderful] qualities! Let's rejoice in them. Let's pay respect to them!*

**Sagaramati:** I think you'd have to be quite developed to worship the Buddha, in a sense.

**S:** Yes, you really would.

**Sagaramati:** Worship in fact represents quite a high level of development. It means you're not projecting and you feel in contact with something almost transcendental.

**S:** That's right. It's certainly not true that worship is for the beginner, which is very often the point of view that one hears expressed.

**Sagaramati:** It's for the masses.

**S:** It's for the masses, for the non-intellectual majority - the unintelligent, the undeveloped. It's a sort of crutch that they need until they're intellectually developed enough to throw it away - this is the sort of language that one hears, and it's totally wrong. This is why some people have been rather surprised that someone like Shantideva, who had evidently such a deep understanding of the Dharma, could at the same time be so devotional. Yet in fact this is what you find. This is what I found in India: that certain very very wise, and deeply learned and profound people were, at the same time, very highly devotional. The two seemed to go together, whereas according to popular belief they don't go together. When you become really wise you are supposed to leave behind your devotion. But I never found that at all.

**Sagaramati:** From that point of view it definitely makes sense, that the more understanding you have the more devotional you will be.

**S:** Yes, I think that's very true.

**Richard:** I remember you saying in a lecture once that [in Tibet] it's only the Rinpoches [or Incarnate Lamas] who performed the longer and more complex rituals, so it's all on that same level.

**Mark:** Maybe there's something about projection tied up with the idea that you only worship until you can do something better - almost, I suppose, until you've achieved that state yourself.

**S:** Except that there's the intermediate state of being a real worshipper. First you're the projectionist, then you're the worshipper, and then you are worthy yourself.

**Richard:** So, to start with, worshipping is projecting.

**S:** Sometimes not even projection, because it's not all that easy genuinely to project, anyway. You can't do it by force of will; it's an unconscious process. That's why quite a lot of people, when they come along new to the centre and are confronted with the shrine [with its Buddha-image, lighted candles etc] will just feel completely cold, completely uninvolved, because (i) they don't project, (ii) they've no genuine feelings of devotion, and yet (iii) they're not worthy themselves. The whole thing therefore leaves them

completely cold. They\_re not even able to project, what to speak of worshipping! [In some cases of course, there may be a negative projection, as when the shrine is - quite mistakenly - associated with some of the less pleasant features of Christian faith and worship.]

**Richard:** Do you think there might be the odd case, though, that somebody comes along and the worship is the thing that turns them on? Because I remember the first time I came along I did a *p3ja*, and that was it so far as I was concerned.

**S:** Yes, this does sometimes happen. John St. John was very powerfully affected by the *P3ja*. He\_s written about it in his forthcoming book *\_Travels in Inner Space\_*

So, *\_The worship of the worshipful\_*,  
or *\_the reverencing of those deserving of reverence\_*, as we might say,  
*This is the greatest luck!*

Or as Woodward says, *\_the greatest blessing\_*. You can see what the Buddha is talking about in this first verse of the Mangala Sutta. He is concerned with the twin ideas of Kalyāna mitratā or spiritual fellowship and *P3ja* or reverence. The first line of the verse deals with the one, the second with the other. I spoke about reverence in my lecture on *\_The Path of Regular Steps and the Path of Irregular Steps\_*. There was a quotation from Coleridge, wasn\_t there? Coleridge had detected, all those years ago, a decline in reverence - reverence being the feeling or attitude you have towards something or someone acknowledged to being genuinely superior to yourself and, therefore, beyond your understanding.

*In a fair land to dwell...*

*Patir3padesav1so ca*. Or, as Woodward renders it. *\_To dwell in a pleasant spot\_*. *Patir3pa* could be interpreted as beautiful, even attractive, but it really means suitable or appropriate. For, instance, when someone who wants to be ordained as a bhikkhu or *\_monk\_* asks an elder bhikkhu to act as his preceptor, the latter may give his consent by saying *\_Patir3pam\_*, meaning *\_It\_s suitable\_*, or *\_It\_s all right\_*, or, translating the expression more colloquially - *\_That\_s fine\_*. *\_Will you be my preceptor?\_* *\_That\_s fine\_*.

*Patir3padesa* is thus *\_a fine spot\_*. To dwell in a fine spot is a mangala. Why is this? It is because of the importance of environment. So you see how commonsensical, in a way, the Buddha\_s approach is. First of all He talks about spiritual fellowship, then about a feeling of reverence towards those who are more developed than ourselves, and then comes *\_To dwell in a fine spot\_*. That is, in a good, a suitable, environment. We know very well how important this is just from our experience of the *\_retreat\_* situation [when we go away for a period of meditation, study discussion etc., either on our own or with other people]. We know how the mind changes according to the change in environment - how you are helped by dwelling *\_in a fine spot\_*. This is something quite basic, quite elementary even. But the Buddha - adopting a slightly different point of view - is reckoning it here as a blessing, as an *\_auspicious sign\_*.

**Sagaramati:** Because only good can come of it.

**S:** Because only good can come of it. But it does raise the question, What is **really** a fine spot? [Laughter] You shouldn\_t jump to conclusions. It is not necessarily a quiet spot. It is not necessarily a peaceful place in the country. The Sutta doesn\_t say that! *It says \_a fine spot\_*. *So what is \_a fine spot\_? Among other things, \_a fine spot\_ is where you can meet \_good friends\_*.

**Mark:** And from that point of view...

**Gary:** (Softly) *\_Pundarika\_ or *\_Sukhavati!**

**S:** Right. We mustn't jump to the conclusion that the fine spot necessarily means something peaceful, or easy, or even pleasant. As you get more advanced, and more experienced, the fine spot might be a quite difficult situation.

**Richard:** It's sort of relative, then.

**S:** Yes. The fine spot, or the suitable spot, is not just the spot that makes everything easy for you. Because if everything is easy there may be certain more sterling qualities you just don't develop. Hakuin, the great Japanese Zen master - Rinzai Zen master - of the eighteenth century, firmly maintained that the best time to meditate, to make spiritual progress, was when you were sick, when you were ill, when you were suffering. This is very true, actually.

**Graham:** That's when it comes to discipline, you know, if you discipline yourself on all occasions, in all situations.

**S:** When you are a beginner, yes, conditions can get you down, and [sometimes] you just can't practise at all. So you need *\_good\_ pleasant, and agreeable surroundings.* But as you get more experienced, and more firm within yourself, you should quite freely expose yourself to what are, in a sense, more difficult situations, and [even] live in more difficult surroundings. That's the Bodhisattva spirit: not to look out for easy, comfortable, attractive, agreeable surroundings, and nice, pleasant people all the time. It may be much more stimulating, and much more beneficial in the long run, for you to be in what may seem to be difficult surroundings and difficult conditions.

**Richard:** Padmasambhava and the cremation ground springs to mind: a sort of crucial situation.

**S:** Right. For the beginner it will certainly be the pleasant, quiet spot [that will be *\_fine\_*]: where you can meditate and have good friends, and where there aren't too many interruptions. Especially, perhaps, [it will be] a place in the country and all that kind of thing. For beginners, you may [therefore] say, the retreat situation is the best. But maybe for someone a bit more advanced the city centre [Laughter] is the best situation.

**Graham:** I think then it's quite a test, to yourself, to be able to sit through maybe noise, disturbance. Maybe it's not even meditation then, but you're practising...

**S:** You're practising, perhaps patience, if nothing else.

**Lokamitra:** The importance of solitary retreats has come back to me recently **very** strongly. Working in the city seems to be a very good situation for a lot of people; but recently I've been finding myself becoming very conscious, personally, of having a sort of defiled consciousness, if you like. [After a while] you're just affected by the permanent noise, the permanent building [work], the greyness.

**S:** Yes, of course. You're not really able to get on top of it. You're only able to bear it. Even to be able to bear it is a good thing. But you can't merely bear it indefinitely. You need a respite. That is why for the majority of people, for quite a long time, it's good, best even, to be able to alternate between town

and country. Most people can't benefit from being indefinitely on retreat. They'll stagnate in the end. Hardly anybody would benefit from being indefinitely in the city. Because they would be worn down. But to alternate between the two can be very positive and very fruitful.

**Lokamitra:** It does seem that the city does have a strong wearing effect...

**S:** Hakuin of course maintains that to be in difficult situations gives you a lot of energy - if you face the difficult situation in the right sort of spirit. Well, Hakuin was Hakuin, no doubt. What he says is true, but it isn't necessarily true for everybody indefinitely. Just as it doesn't follow that the longer you meditate the better your meditation becomes, in the same way it doesn't follow, necessarily, that the longer you stay in the city the more energy you get. No there may be a point beyond which there are only diminishing returns. [When you reach that point] then you have to break off and go into the country for a while.

**Gary:** I should imagine that's quite a difficult situation anyway: going into the country after being in the city.

**S:** Some people feel very restless, because there's nothing to do. They feel very jumpy.

**Gary:** They get really attached to the idea of getting up and doing something straight away.

**Graham:** I found it difficult when I went to \_Albemarle\_ [in Norfolk] even after a retreat.

**S:** Dwelling in \_a fair land\_, or in \_a fine land\_, is certainly very good for the beginner, but we have to be careful that we don't assume too much what the \_fair land\_ actually is like. It varies according to our level of development. At the beginning it may be a very easy sort of situation: quiet and peaceful. Later on it may be a much more difficult and demanding situation - which is more positive and creative for us [at that stage].

...good wrought In past...

**S:** Or, \_To have done good deeds in former births\_. (Woodward) *Pubbe ca katapunnat1. Pubbe*, in the past, formerly *katapunnat1*, good deeds done. In other words, this mangala is that of meritorious works performed in the past, [\_past\_ being understood, traditionally, as referring to one's previous existences] Why do you think the Buddha mentions this, saying that if you've done good deeds in the past that's an auspicious sign? [It's] because if you've done good deeds in the past you can be sure that some happiness is on its way - even if you are not experiencing it now.

**Richard:** Has this got anything to do with the idea that you need merit to develop spiritually?

**S:** [You mean] a \_store of merit\_.

**Sagaramati:** This seems to be a tricky one, in the West. I feel that it's going to be very tricky.

**S:** \_Tricky\_ because it's connected with the whole idea of karma and rebirth [which some Western Buddhists have difficulty in accepting]

**Sagaramati:** Yes.

**S:** Having a store of merit means having a solid, positive human base for your spiritual development, especially [in the form of] the positive emotions - emotions like friendliness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity, i.e. the four Brahma Viharas. It's very important to have that base.

**Sagaramati:** The positive emotion almost always seems to be the result of something done in the past. Even when you're practising, say, *karunī-bhīṣā*, you don't actually experience compassion [at the time], but you're working towards it. If you can believe, or have a feeling, that there is this karmic process [going on] then you can, I suppose, believe that in the future some results [of your practice] will come about.

**S:** I've talked about this idea of *puṇya* [Skt. *puṇya*] quite a bit lately. I think I talked about it down in London once or twice. *Puṇya* is not just good action: it's a bit more than that. It's the *aura* almost, or the *vibration* in you, which is set up by good action. When you strike a certain note on a musical instrument the sound of that note goes on vibrating in the air, and the more often you strike that note, the more [strongly] does the sound go on vibrating at that particular pitch. Similarly, the [performance of] a good deed sets up a *vibration* in you - a vibration which is you. If a person is always performing certain good deeds, or thinking certain good thoughts - and deeds here includes thoughts - in fact, thought is a deed even more than external physical action - then a certain vibration is set up. The individual, the person himself, is vibrating in a certain way: a certain **aura** is created. He produces therefore, a certain impression: he has a certain affect on other people, and on his surroundings. So it's as though the Buddha is saying it's a very good thing, it's a blessing, it's a sign of good luck - if the quality of your being is such that you are *vibrating* in this sort of positive way - in the way which, according to Buddhist teaching, is brought about by the good deeds done in the past.

But in any case, [regardless of] whether or not it is accepted that it is the result of *good wrought / In past*, it is a good and a lucky and an auspicious thing that you *vibrate* in this positive way in the present. This is what the Buddha is saying. This word *puṇya* here is very significant. For instance, suppose you meet someone who is really happy and cheerful, may be attractive to look at as well, and very agreeable [you will find that] he creates a very pleasant atmosphere, sets up a very pleasant vibration. Why is this? Well, you may or may not believe that it's all the result of good deeds done in the past, but the fact is that this particular person sets up this particular kind of vibration, which is a very good thing. Certainly it augurs well for him in the future. Because it's very attractive. [With it] he makes friends: he wins friends and influences people. [Laughter] At least that. So we see that *puṇya* is not just the good deed. It's the good deed plus the vibration that the good deed sets up, and the aura it creates around the person who has performed it and is [still] performing it. On a very much higher, transcendental level, this is connected or linked up with the Buddha's [subtle] *rūpakīya*, i.e. [what in Mahayana Buddhism is called] His *sambhogakīya*.

**Lokamitra:** Can you say a bit more about that?

**S:** In the course of His career as a Bodhisattva the Buddha accumulates [throughout innumerable lives] boundless good deeds which gradually set up more and more powerful vibrations which cling about Him as His *sambhogakīya* - His *body of glory*, as it were. This is what the *sambhogakīya* is: a sort of *puṇyakīya* on the transcendental plane. So far as I know, the expression *puṇyakīya* is never actually used in Sanskrit Buddhist texts [in this sense]: but it is an intelligible expression none the less. Certainly there is mention of the *puṇyasambhīra*, or *accumulation of merits*, and the *puṇyasambhīra* is said, sometimes, to correspond to the *sambhogakīya*, just as the *jñānasambhīra*, or *accumulation of knowledge*, corresponds to the *dharmakīya*. Thus you could conceivably speak of a *puṇyakīya*. I also compare the *sambhogakīya*, and the *puṇyakīya* too, if you like, to the works of the artist or the

writer. Have you ever seen those Children\_s Encyclopaedia pictures of Dickens at his desk or Shakespeare with his quill pen in his hand, and, all around them, the characters that they have created? Around Dickens there is Mrs. Gamp and David Copperfield and Martin Chuzzlewit and Mr. Pickwick, all hovering in a sort of cloud. Around Shakespeare there is Romeo and Juliet and King Lear and Hamlet and all the rest of them, it\_s a bit like an aura. They [i.e. Dickens and Shakespeare] created this, they produced this. It\_s like their *\_punyakIya\_*, in a way. Do you get the idea? In the case of the Buddha and His *sambhogakIya* the connection is very much like that.

**Richard:** If the Buddha, through his good deeds [in previous existences] created this sort of aura, then how do the archetypal Bodhisattvas like Avalokiteshvara and Manjughosa come into the picture?

**S:** Well, if you don\_t regard the archetypal Bodhisattvas as [real] individual personalities, you can regard them as different aspects of the total *sambhogakIya*. Each Bodhisattva has got a very specific function: one is wisdom, one is compassion, and so on; but the *sambhogakIya* is all of these together. Anyway, that takes us a long way from the Pali Canon. [Laughter] He\_s cunningly luring us onto Tantric territory [*Richard snaps his fingers in \_Tantric fashion\_*], edging us nearer and nearer to it. [Laughter] But you can see that the seed of the later developments is in the Pali Canon. Because the Mangala Sutta\_s idea of *pu\_\_a* was what we started talking about. [Laughter] So [back to] *\_Good wrought / In past\_ Pu\_\_akamma* in the past means now. *Akamma* is merit-producing action. It\_s not just the good deed itself but what I call the vibration that the good deed sets up, the aura that it creates around you. [This is what] the fact that you have done all these good deeds [really is]. When you see the Buddha in the flesh, you don\_t [unless you are a Bodhisattva] see the *sambhogakIya*. In the same way, when you meet the great writer you don\_t [actually] **see** all the works that he\_s produced - but they are there. They are just as much a part of him [as they would have been if they were visible], even though you can\_t see them. If you\_d met Shakespeare you wouldn\_t have seen or felt Lear and Macbeth and so on. But they are there in his mind: he\_s produced them; he\_s created them. They are part of his invisible *r3pakIya*. You see the visible *r3pakIya* [i.e. the physical body]; you don\_t see the invisible *r3pakIya* [i.e. the *sambhogakIya*] You don\_t see the *punyakIya*.....

(Break in recording)

**Lokamitra:** It seems that punya can also refer to the mundane aspects of the spiral [of spiritual/transcendental development, i.e. to the first seven out of the twelve positive nidanas].

**S:** Yes, very much so.

**Lokamitra:** This goes back to what you said about establishing a healthy base [for one\_s spiritual development].

**S:** Yes, a healthy, solid human base. Especially by way of [cultivating] positive emotion. If someone has positive emotions you feel that, don\_t you, just as you feel the negative emotions.

**Sagaramati:** Because they\_re [also] part of the cyclic process, [as well as part of the spiral] you can fall away from good actions. Is this because you just sit back, as if it were, and ride out that good punya you\_ve built up?

**S:** It\_s also the *\_active\_* gravitational pull from the rest of your being. You\_re not a totally integrated person. You haven\_t performed the good actions - even though you have performed them - with the **whole** of yourself. There\_s still a large part of you that isn\_t involved, perhaps doesn\_t want to be

involved, and that large part - or larger part - starts asserting itself sooner or later. You have to struggle with it, struggle against it; you have to struggle to preserve and extend that more positive part.

**Lokamitra:** Recently I thought in terms of the first stages of the spiral as creating and accumulating more and more merit. When seen like that it\_s quite a difficult process. It\_s not just a matter of making offerings and so on, but of really bringing into play all one\_ s emotional energies and making them positive. That\_s very much where the merit is.

**S:** It\_s a matter of being a positive person.

**Sagaramati:** Also, if you have got a lot of charisma, or whatever you call it, you are more open to other things - well, to temptations - than you would be if you didn\_t have a charisma.

**Graham:** What do you mean?

**Sagaramati:** Well, if you\_re really good looking, and have a good personality and so on, you\_re going to attract a lot of attention.

**S:** You can be carried away by it. You can become a bit Intoxicated with your own success, your own popularity, your own influence. Let\_s go on to the next mangala.

*to have high aims for self..*

*AttasammIpa7idhi ca.* Woodward translates this as \_To have set oneself on the right path,\_ which is not quite so literal, but faithful enough to the spirit of the word. [Chalmers translates \_aspiration high.\_]

**Mark:** To decide that the path of the Dharma is the one which you actually want to follow, and not that of something of [merely] passing interest.

**S:** Right. Actually to have set yourself on it. To have started following it. [You do this because it naturally follows from the mangalas so far enumerated] First of all you associate with the wise and avoid the unwise, the fools. Next you have the benefit and the advantage of spiritual fellowship. Then you recognize that there are others more developed than yourself and adopt a worshipping or reverential attitude towards them. After that you live in a suitable environment. Finally, you have a stock of merit from the past, Well, having come so far, what do you do next? You set yourself **on the right path**. You start actually practising now.

One could say that this mangala consists in setting oneself on the path of the Higher Evolution: setting oneself on the Eightfold Path: setting oneself on the Path of Regular Steps: setting oneself to practise regularly and systematically. You realize what advantages you have had in one way and another - whether accruing from karma or not. You are in association with the wise, the spiritually mature, and you are avoiding the company of the spiritually immature, the fools. You are able to look up to certain people, genuinely. You have the advantage of dwelling in an environment which is conducive to your development. You seem to have a stock of merit from the past; you\_re a naturally positive sort of person. So what do you do next? You actually start practising, in a systematic manner. You set yourself on the right path.

**Lokamitra:** All these things [i.e. all the mangalas] not only set up the right conditions for the future - if you like, for Enlightenment. They also make one feel good at the very time.

**S:** Right.

**Sagaramati:** How would merit, now, fit into the Higher Evolution? Last Sunday, or the Sunday before, someone [at the Centre] commented that it was good that we have this concept of the Higher Evolution, because [then] we don\_t have to bother about things like merit. This is why I brought that [point] up earlier.

**S:** The Higher Evolution is a process that can be considered within the context of this present life. This is presumably what that person was referring to. But it can [also] be considered from the Buddhist point of view within the context of karma and rebirth, because the process of the Higher Evolution can span a number of successive lives.

**Sagaramati:** That automatically brings in the question of karma, and karma brings in the question of merit.

**S:** Certainly. But merit can [also accrue] within the span of a single lifetime. If you give dana now, merit accrues to you now. You don\_t necessarily have to wait until a future life or future birth.

**Lokamitra:** I see the Higher Evolution as a process entirely to do with merit.

**Sagaramati:** The person I mentioned was quite glad, almost, that in the Higher Evolution we don\_t bring in anything like karma and merit.

**Lokamitra:** I think that\_s because people see merit in a very materialistic way, which it doesn\_t have to be.

**S:** Punya is that quality of your being which is brought about by your regular performance of skilful actions. It\_s a sort of modification of your being. Inasmuch as the skilful action doesn\_t proceed from wisdom in the transcendental sense it\_s not a permanent modification. That [i.e. a permanent modification] would be Enlightenment, or a measure of Enlightenment. But it [i.e. punya] is at least a temporary modification [of your being] which provides you with a basis for the development of insight and wisdom: a very strong, powerful and positive basis.

**Lokamitra:** Would that be a necessary basis?

**S:** A necessary basis too.

**Sagaramati:** What they call a working basis.

**S:** Yes, a working basis. This is why traditionally, in Buddhism, great importance is attached to \_earning merit\_ or \_making merit\_.

**Graham:** Does this mean action [as] opposed to words or both together?

**S:** Both together. Though action is also understood as including thinking.

**Lokamitra:** To perform certain actions requires a certain corresponding emotional attitude which brings about, or encourages, that emotional attitude, and encourages its further development.



**S:** It\_s a cumulative process.

**Lokamitra:** I see this very much in working for the movement.

**S:** Well, the more you do the more you **can** do. [Laughter]. In the sense that the more you do the more you\_re able to do. I don\_t mean the more you\_re **allowed** to do.

**Lokamitra:** But not only that. You need a certain emotional approach to be able to do it, and to continue with it; and to go on and on requires further emotional development.

**Gary:** Can you say more about that, Lokamitra?

**Lokamitra:** My thinking on the subject is only very general, but...

**Richard:** (Interjecting). Do you mean sort of sense of confidence in taking things on? You know, like being stable.

**S:** It\_s partly that.

**Richard:** And being sort of, you know, just...

**S:** But it\_s more also. Doing things not only expends energy but gives you energy.

**Lokamitra:** Also you are in conflict, as it were, with the gravitational pull. You may want to go off and do something [of your own] or to have a rest; but there\_s something drawing you on; it draws out the positive emotions, and the \_heroic\_ qualities almost.

**S:** It\_s as though Mara [the Evil One] was saying, \_Come on, take it easy. Take the day off.\_ And the voice of the Buddha says, \_No, you don\_t need to take the day off. You can carry on quite easily.\_

**Lokamitra:** When things get difficult you can quite easily think well...

**S:** \_Mara was right after all.\_

**Lokamitra:** But when things get \_dry\_ there are opportunities, you know, for bringing up new life.

**S:** I think Hakuin was getting at this sort of thing. He even said you could have particularly good meditations under difficult conditions. You drew extra energy from that - which I\_m sure is true of people who are a bit more advanced.

**Richard:** One thing that just keeps coming to my mind all the time in this context is this business of the \_crucial situation\_. I remember that when I moved to London [from Brighton] I was pretty frightened. I didn\_t know what was going to happen. But the energy that I got from it was tremendous.

**S:** Eveline was pretty frightened of moving to Brighton. [Laughter] It does seem ridiculous, doesn\_t it. You\_re afraid of going to London, where she feels perfectly at home, and she was afraid of going to Brighton, where you feel perfectly at home.

**Richard:** It was just the energy that was produced from that situation.

**S:** You produced energy by resisting inertia. Energy is required to overcome inertia so, if you overcome inertia, you are producing energy. Having overcome inertia you feel more full of energy, more confident, more potent.

*Learning and skill and being trained  
In discipline, words spoken well:  
This is the greatest luck.*

This is the next verse, which contains four mangalas. The first is *\_learning\_ (bIhusacca)* or, as Woodward more accurately renders it, *\_much learning\_*. *BIhusacca* is a well known term. *BIhu* is *\_much\_* and *sacca* is *\_learning\_* or *\_knowledge\_* [literally, *\_hearing\_*, knowledge being in the Buddha's day transmitted entirely by oral means, so that the learned man was the man who had heard much, the man of *\_much hearing\_*]. Sometimes the term is translated *\_much understanding\_*. It's certainly not learning in the book sense: that is the main point to be understood here. There were no books at that time anyway.

**Richard:** Could it be wisdom?

**S:** No, it is more like knowledge, understanding: understanding of things heard, especially.

**Richard:** It's got *\_much learning and much science\_* in Woodward's translation.

**S:** *\_Science\_* translates *sippa*, the second mangala of the verse. This gives us a clue to the real meaning of *sacca*. It is learning and knowledge in the more cultural sense. It is the [traditional] arts and sciences.

Perhaps *\_culture\_* would be a better word, in view of the context, though this is not a literal translation. *Sippa* [Skt. *Oilpa*] is not so much *\_skill\_* as *\_craft\_* or even handicraft. In ancient Indian literature there is a work called the *Oilpa-sastra*, which is a sort of text book of architecture, sculpture, and so on. Thus we see that whereas *sacca* represents the more theoretical, mental side of things, *sippa* represents the more practical, even more mechanical side.

In a way it's quite important that - to pass on now to this mangala - *sippa* or *\_craft\_* is included here by the Buddha as an *\_auspicious sign\_*. In ancient India, as in ancient Greece, manual work - including handicraft - was regarded as much inferior to mental work. As you know, the Greeks had a prejudice against manual work, physical work. It was the work of things that should be left to the slaves to do. Similarly, in India manual work is the sort of thing you left to the lower castes to do. [The attitude is still widely prevalent.] In orthodox Hindu society blacksmiths and goldsmiths - even artists - had a quite lowly caste status. It is therefore significant that the Buddha should have regarded *sippa* or *Oilpa* as an auspicious sign, a source of future blessing. By speaking in terms of *\_learning and skill\_* He gives a place to the arts and sciences **and** a place to the handicrafts. He gives a place to culture **and** a place to the more practical side of things as well. Such an emphasis was badly needed in ancient - as in modern - India.

**Sagaramati:** Going back to the Greeks, it's a bit like Socrates explaining morality in terms of - for example - the carpenter's skill. They called it [i.e. morality] *arete*, I think.

**S:** *Arete* is virtue. It is excellence. You find exactly the same line of thought in the *SIma\_\_aphala suttanta* of the *D2gha-Nik1ya*. [Dialogues of the Buddha, Part One, Tr. T.W. Rhys Davids. Pali Text

Society, London. (Reprinted) 1973. p.65] *The King of Magadha*, Ajlitasattu, comes to see the Buddha and says that there are a number of crafts - those of mahouts, horsemen, and so on, down to weavers, basket-makers, potters, and so on - all of which, enjoy, in this very world, the visible fruits of their craft. \_Can you, Sir\_, he asked the Buddha, \_declare to me any such immediate fruit (*phala*) visible in this very world, of the life of a recluse (*samana*)\_ The Buddha replies that He can, and to this end puts a question to the King. In this way the *suttanta* proceeds. Clearly Socrates and the Buddha are following the same line of thought. In the case of Socrates, the reasoning is from the particular to the general. The good wheelwright is the man who makes a good wheel. The good shoemaker is the man who makes a good shoe. But what is the good **man**? What does **he** produce? He \_produces\_ virtue. In the case of the Buddha He reasons from one particular case to another particular case. Just as the mahouts, and so on, enjoy the fruits of their craftsmanship in the form of a livelihood for themselves and their families, so the recluse enjoys the fruits of his recluseship in the form of, for instance, the personal experience of the four *jhanas* or states of \_higher consciousness\_. In the *SIma\_\_aphala-suttanta*, of course, the practice of the crafts is only **compared** to the living of the spiritual life. In the Mangala Sutta it is, apparently, an integral part of it, at least at a certain stage.

**Lokamitra:** Could it be also that, as one progresses along the spiritual path, one will be prepared to turn to whatever is needed at the time?

**S:** Yes, it\_s also that, but principally it\_s that the Buddha is going step by step. You\_ve got associating with the wise - worship of the worshipful - dwelling in a fair land - having done good deeds in the past and having, therefore, an accumulation of punya - to have set oneself on the right path - you\_ve got all these things. But having got them, what do you actually **do**? The Buddha starts with very simple things. You at least get into the arts and sciences: that at least represents a step forward in ordinary human terms. You become a more cultured and knowledgeable individual. You become culturally productive. In other words, at this stage you fulfil certain [specifically] human norms, and in this, way lay a very solid foundation for your future **spiritual** development.

*and being trained  
In discipline...*

*Vinayo ca susikkhito*. Woodward says, \_and a discipline well learned.\_ So what is *vinaya*? We are familiar with Vinaya in the purely \_monastic\_ context, but the word doesn\_t necessarily have t at narrow meaning. A popular traditional [not scientific] explanation is that *vinaya* is that which leads (*nayati*) away from (*vi*) all that is unskilful. The word really means \_discipline\_, though not in the narrower sense, or something like \_skilful behaviour\_. *Susikkhito* means \_well learned\_. So again there\_s a sequence. First comes culture - the arts and sciences - and then there\_s the matter of your own behaviour and conduct. You are getting on to *sila* or ethics now, aren\_t you? Do you see the sequence? First of all there are all the good external conditions, all the advantages and facilities in the midst of which you find yourself. Then having found yourself thus favourably situated, you make up your mind to set yourself on the right path. How do you go about this? First you achieve a certain level of cultural development, then you start regulating your behaviour you start practising *sila*. In this way you gradually progress. There then takes place an extension of your *sila*.

*... words well spoken ...*

*SubhIsita ca yI vIcI*. The *sila*, the \_being well trained\_, might consist, for instance, in your abstaining from harming living beings, or from taking what did not belong to you, and from this you come onto right speech, to \_words well spoken\_ *subhIsita ca yI vIcI*. \_Su\_ is good, happy, appropriate; *bhIsitI*

is (what is) well spoken\_, or pleasant utterance\_, as in Woodward\_s translation. So it\_s masses of *sila*. First of all you start with the opportunities and facilities; then comes your decision to set yourself on the right path; next your practice of the arts and sciences, and becoming a cultured person and after that you proceed to ethics - to matters of personal ethical discipline, including right speech, even perfect speech.

**Sagaramati:** I suppose in that sense you re beginning to express something.

**S:** Yes, you\_re beginning to express. There\_s further \_expression\_ in the next verse

*Service to parents, care of son  
And wife, a peaceful livelihood:  
This is the greatest luck.*

Clearly one is concerned, at this stage, with the \_householder\_ path. You haven\_t yet become a bhikkhu or \_monk\_, you haven\_t yet \_gone forth\_: you\_re still functioning within the ordinary social and domestic framework: you haven\_t burst through it yet. You could also look at it in another way: in terms of heredity. First of all there\_s the advantages you are born with - the fact that you\_re born in a good country, among good people. then you have the benefit of a good education: you become knowledgeable, and are well trained. Then the question of your parents comes in, and the question of your attitude towards them. You could look at it like that.

**Graham:** Even though you\_ve gone forth\_, should you still...?

**S:** At this stage you haven\_t \_gone forth\_. you\_ve only set yourself on the right path in a very preliminary and basic - even elementary - way. You\_re still practising that part of the path that comes in **before** your \_going forth\_ from home into homelessness: *\_Service to parents, / care of son / And wife, a peaceful livelihood\_*, and various other things. For quite a long time - for several verses of the Mangala Sutta - one is concerned, certainly within the ancient Indian context - with practising the Dharma as a householder, as one who has not yet \_gone forth\_. Thus there comes *\_Service to parents\_: mItIpitu upatthInam*. The word *upatthInam* really means something more like \_support\_.

**Richard:** That\_s what\_s in Woodward\_s translation.

**S:** Why do you think \_support of parents\_ comes in? It\_s partly because of the general nature of ancient Indian social life. In those days there was no such thing as state insurance, pensions, and all that. Parents relied on their sons, and even daughters perhaps, to look after them in their old age and repay their debt to them, as it were. You\_re supposed to reflect that when you were young your parents looked after you, brought you up, so that it\_s only right and natural that when they are old you should care for them and support them.

**Mark:** Could it perhaps have a slightly different meaning, so far as we are concerned? Could it not mean that even though you leave home, and leave your parents behind you, still you\_re not rejecting them or pushing them out of existence: you still respect them.

**S:** In ancient India you didn\_t leave home [when you grew up] and set up a separate household. If you remained a lay person [i.e. did not go forth as a \_wanderer\_] you brought your wife into the family and your children were born and grew up there [with your unmarried sisters and your brothers and their wives and children] as part of a single joint family, a single extended household. Eventually you would take over your father\_s work. If he was a blacksmith, you would become a blacksmith. Indeed, he

would have taught you the work when you were small.

**Mark:** When he died, the cycle would just continue.

**S:** Right. Father would take a back seat, and you would look after him - feed him and support him - just as he had done with you when you were a child. It was a sort of natural cycle. You didn't leave home and then, after finding a wife, set up a separate household. That wasn't the sort of thing that happened. In the case of very bad sons, the [worst] criticism [that could be levelled against them] is that they drove out their old parents, who have to wander from place to place as beggars.

**Mark:** And the sons keep the house for themselves.

**S:** The sons keep the house for themselves. Even now the Hindu idea is that the sons have a right to the family property. This is quite an important conception, quite different from our own [except, to some extent, in the case of the entailed estate]. As soon as the sons are born they automatically have a share in the property, as it were, and the father can't disinherit them, because it's joint family property, not his personal property. The law has now been changed in India, I believe, or at least modified, but all through the British period the law governing joint family property fully applied. But if the [grown up] sons ganged up against the father they could drive him out of the house and force him, and even their old mother, to wander from place to place as beggars - and occasionally this did happen, though such unfilial conduct was very much looked down upon. Sometimes sons did behave in this way, even in India. So it wasn't so much a case of the son leaving home and setting up his own separate establishment: occasionally it might mean the father being driven out.

Now inasmuch as the whole family was living under the same roof, and as the son had taken over the father's trade or profession, and was now the earner, the moneymaker, he supported his old father and mother and, maybe, the younger dependent members of the family as well. This was quite natural: it was the decent thing to do. But going a bit more deeply - a bit more psychologically - into the matter, this mangalam [i.e. service to parents] indicates something I've talked about quite a lot over the last two or three years: the importance psychologically, and therefore, in the long run, spiritually - inasmuch as the psychological provides a positive basis for the spiritual - of a positive relationship with your parents. I've sometimes said that you can't **not** have a relationship with your parents: if it isn't positive then it must be negative. Do you see what I mean? From the psychological - and ultimately spiritual point of view it's in your own best interests to have a positive relationship with your parents: not to cherish hatred and so on, not to be on bad terms, as very often people are these days. A bad relationship with them means a sort of emotional breach in you, because the natural relationship with the parents is very close, especially with the mother. If you feel negatively **even** towards your parents it means the emotional breach must be **very** deep indeed. In ancient India, and in Buddhism generally, it's considered particularly bad to kill your father or your mother - worse than killing anybody else. Why? Because you must be more negatively motivated to kill your parents than to kill anybody else, in order to [be able to] overcome the [strong] natural attachment to, and natural love for, the parents. Killing them means [doing] a [so] much greater violence to your own natural feeling. If you feel negative towards your parents you feel very very negative indeed.

**Richard:** My parents used to be quite near when I was in Brighton and obviously I used to see them fairly regularly. Since I've moved to London I haven't wanted to go and see them even when I've been in Brighton, but I don't feel it was negative. It was just that I didn't want to go. When my mother phoned the Centre the other day, really wanting me to go and see them, I said, 'Well, I just can't: I'm too busy.' But I didn't feel particularly negative.

**S:** There is another aspect of the matter: a sort of cutting free. Almost always nowadays, I think, the son has to cut free and, maybe, not have much at all to do with his parents for a year or two. Not because he has any negative feelings towards them - at least ideally it shouldn't be for that reason - but just because he wants to make a clean break and be psychologically independent. Because how can you feel **really** positive towards your parents unless you **are** independent? If you feel dependent you'll only feel resentful: you can't feel anything else. So you must make that clean break. If **they** don't have the sense to chuck you out, by the time you're about eighteen or nineteen, **you must leave**, if you've got enough common sense to understand the situation. Under a decent cultural system, and a decent tradition, you would have left. If you had been brought up as a Red Indian, or something like that - brought up by people who understand these things - you would have been taken away from your mother and your father by the tribe as a boy, even, and kept with the wise old men for a bit, and **weaned** from mother etc., etc. Chintamani has written about this in his article *Leaving Mother and Initiation into Manhood*.

**Richard:** The sort of trap that I fell into was that when I was feeling ill, or had the blues, I used to go straight back and spend a day or something with my parents. It used to be awful: even worse.

**S:** You should go back when you feel really good - when you feel you can be independent and relate to them in an independent sort of way. **That's** the time to go back. You should bounce back, not collapse in a soggy sort of heap on the doorstep pleading *Mum, take me in!* [Laughter]

**Lokamitra:** This cutting off is something that is going to hurt them quite a bit, but it doesn't mean to say that one is being negative.

**S:** No, one isn't really being negative in doing that. One is being really positive.

**Lokamitra:** Even though it might hurt them, in a way.

**S:** It can't really hurt them. It may go against their neurotic feelings of attachment to **you**; but it can't really hurt them. [Pause] So it's very important to get things emotionally straight with one's parents.

**Richard:** One can also fall into the trap - I know I've done this - of thinking, *Oh well, I'll go home. It'll please them.* Really I'm just sort of rationalising.

**S:** Well, that's not much good, if it doesn't please you. If you're glad to see them in a genuine, healthy way, by all means go home. But if you aren't, probably it's better not to do so until you **can** feel more positive. If you don't enjoy your visit to them the chances are that they won't really enjoy it either. They'll certainly pick up on how you're feeling, at least unconsciously. [Pause] In almost all cases the break needs to be made, and if they can't push you out you must leave, since there's no tribe to arrange it all for, you.

**Richard:** I left when I got into Buddhism, actually.

**S:** Later on, when we have a bigger Movement, maybe with children growing up within it, there will have to be someone appointed to go round plucking the children from their parents as soon as they reach a certain age: taking them off on permanent retreat, or at least for a sort of camping period for a couple of years somewhere. They could take them off to Australia [Laughter] or anywhere away from their parents. We should be sending shiploads of them every year. [Laughter]

**Richard:** With the elders.

**S:** There was a saying I used to quote: \_The greatest misfortune that can befall a young man is to have a loving mother.\_ [Pause] I've seen some of these loving mothers. [Laughter] You can have a really positive relationship with your parents only if you are emotionally mature and can relate to them simply as another individual, not just as their son or their daughter. Parents - especially mothers - have got this terrible tendency to see you as little Johnny, aged about five or six when you're twenty-five or twenty-six, or even thirty-five or thirty-six.

**Lokamitra:** You may be able to relate to them as an individual, but they still may not be able to relate to you as such.

**S:** Unfortunately this may happen. You may then have to limit your contact with them, just because two-way communication on that sort of [individual] basis isn't possible, and [to insist on it] may upset them. If they refuse to accept you as an individual you can't really do anything about it.

**Richard:** One thing that I got into when I used to go and visit my parents was hugging my father - really going up to him and giving him a big hug, like a mate. At first he was really sort of cold, but [in the end] he started really getting into it. I see that [sort of behaviour] very much [as a way of] relating as an individual and both [of you being] very affectionate.

**S:** There's an admirable verse in the *Manu Smṛiti*, the great Hindu law book. Though there is much in this ancient work that Buddhists can't agree with [such as the laws regarding caste], there are certain other things which are very basic and commonsensical and universally acceptable. The verse in question advises the father that when his son reaches the age of sixteen he should cease to regard him as a son and regard him as a friend. This is very sound advice, and represents the \_tribal\_ attitude. In a way, the child is regarded as belonging not to the father but to the tribe: he is a member of the tribe; and this gives him an identity apart from his identity as the child of his father. [The tribesman's position in the tribe is] just like [that of] the son in the Hindu family, who is not just his father's son, but a member of the **family**, and has rights as a member of the **family**, independent of his rights as the son of his father. Do you see the reasoning? When a brahmin boy becomes a brahmin [on being invested with the \_sacred thread\_] he is just as much a brahmin as his father is: in a sense he's equal to his father. His father's a brahmin: he's a brahmin too. If it comes to speaking up in the brahmin assembly they've got equal voice. Maybe the father will speak first, because he's an older man people may even listen to him a bit more; but the son has also got the right to speak up. It's much the same. on a spiritual level, in the [Buddhist] Sangha. Even the very young monk has got a perfect right to pipe up [in the monastic assembly] and say what he thinks - even if he was ordained yesterday - and everybody has to listen to him, just as much as to the seniormost monk. They all have rights. When someone is ordained his position is not just that of the disciple of his teacher but that of a member of the Sangha. In a sense he becomes [by virtue of his ordination] the equal of his teacher, even though the teacher is still his teacher. You see here a rather different attitude from our own. In the West, in the family, [traditionally] all your rights follow from the fact that you are the son of your father. [Modern legislation has changed this to some extent] Your father can disinherit you. It's his property: you've no rights apart from what he graciously gives you. This may be connected - though perhaps the notion is a bit far-fetched - with the idea of God and his supreme despotic will. [In the West] the father is a sort of little God. But in the East, in India, it's not really like that. [There] the son is also a member of the family, and a member of the tribe - even of the caste - independently, almost, of his affiliation to his own father. Your rights do not derive exclusively from your affiliation to your father or, in the case of Buddhism [and the Sangha], exclusively from your spiritual affiliation to your teacher. You are also, equally, a member of the group

or the [spiritual] community, [as the case may be]. I think that\_s quite an important point.

**Sagaramati:** This sort of attitude is so much less narrow. It\_s almost as if God narrows everything down... But in the case of the Indians, their perspective is so much broader, just like their cosmology.

**Graham:** You mentioned in a talk how, as children grow older, the family put them down. If they speak out too much they are snubbed, and so the awe for everything disappears.

**Sagaramati:** The sense of wonder.

**S:** I noticed among the Nepalese a bit of that tendency [to snub the young]. If a young man speaks up, or speaks out of turn, as the elders think, they address him as \_You egg.\_ Some of my young Nepalese friends used to get quite annoyed at this. They\_d come to me and say, \_When I said what I thought about such-and-such a member, what do you think my grandfather said? He said, \_Keep quiet, you egg!\_ [Laughter]

**Sagaramati:** \_Egg\_ meaning that he hadn\_t quite been born yet.

**S:** Hasn\_t even been hatched yet, so how dare he speak up in front of the old roosters. [Laughter] But maybe that\_s enough about parents.

*...care of son  
And wife ...*

or \_Cherishing child and wife\_. (Hare) *Puttadhrassa sanghaho*. You notice that \_son\_ comes first, which is perhaps a bit significant. The wife is only the means to the son. This again is something we don\_t understand much - or maybe have lost - in the West: that the son is more important to the father than the wife is. [In the traditional East] you marry for the sake of progeny - to continue your [ancestral] line - to produce a son in your image. This reminds me of an interview which was given by Mohammed Ali. He was interviewed by an English woman journalist, who asked him if he had ever thought of marrying a white girl. The interviewer obviously expected him to think it a grand idea: interracial harmony and all that. But he answered quite indignantly, \_Why should I marry a white girl? I want a son that looks like me. That is the natural feeling. The father wants his son to look like - to be like - him: to be a continuation of him. So the Indian idea - I think the traditional idea all over the world - is that you marry for the sake of the son, i.e. for getting a son. That is the important thing. that is what marriage is all about. It\_s not to get you a soul mate, or a life companion, or your missing other half, or anything like that. No, you marry for\_ the sake of a son, for the sake of progeny. That\_s why in the *Dhammapada* the fool says, \_This son is mine,\_ not \_This wife is mine.\_ She is not important enough - she is not the subject of a very strong attachment. The strong attachment is to the son and wealth. If anything, the wife is included in wealth, in possessions.

**Sagaramati:** It seems to have been the same with the [ancient] Greeks. In the *Symposium*, I remember, the lowest form of seeking immortality was to produce a son. There didn\_t seem to be any mention of women as such at all.

**S:** Right. I think many men in the West have lost this very primitive and basic feeling for the son.

**Sagaramati:** Somebody said that you thought that in time some of the men who are in the Order would, when they \_grew up\_, [Laughter] settle down and have families.



**S:** I didn't think any such thing. That's a gross misrepresentation - though there's **some** truth in it, as there usually is. [Laughter] . What I said was that in the future, having sorted out their emotional problems, some men Order members **might** decide, quite objectively and conscientiously, to get married and produce a few children and - by way of setting an example - bring them up as children ought to be brought up. There is no reason why a mature and responsible individual should not be able to take on that sort of responsibility, in the right sort of way, if on proper reflection he decides to do so. If he knows what he is doing, and if he can handle the situation, and if, all things considered, it is the best thing for him to do, will, he's a responsible person and that's his decision. But most men would not be in the position to do that. Blinded by passion, pricked by the goad of their desires, they blunder into something they don't really know anything about, find themselves with [a wife and] two or three children - all without knowing what they're doing. That's quite a different sort of situation. But suppose you've been an Order member for ten or fifteen years - suppose you've got over your emotional hang-ups: you're not emotionally dependent - suppose you're a responsible person and know what you're doing - well, if then you decide I'll get married: marriage would be quite a positive sort of situation for me. I'll have two or three children. There's no question of my bringing them up as Buddhists, but I'll lay a positive foundation so that they're [at least] in touch with Buddhism and so that, if ever they do wish to be Buddhists - and conceivably they might want to be - then they'll have a good foundation on which to build. I'll give them that sort of opportunity, that sort of training: - well, that is quite a different thing from blundering into matrimony in the way most people do. That's what I was getting at - that you mustn't exclude that possibility, that option, thinking, No one [in the Order] is ever going to get married: it's impossible. No, marriage [as I have described it] must be left open as an option for the mature, responsible person.

**Graham:** But it would be so difficult to try and find that sort of woman, though! [Laughter]

**S:** Don't you make things more difficult than they actually are! [Laughter]. *We'll be training up the women too! [Laughter] With luck there'll be one trained woman for every ten trained men. [Laughter]*

**Graham:** Not the reverse?

**S:** At least one in ten men could be sure of a suitable trained woman partner. That is the sort of ratio - very roughly - that I was thinking of. [Pause] Anyway, be very careful about believing what I am supposed to have said. Track it down really to source and find out what I really did say.

So, Care of son / And wife. *If you've got a son and a wife, they're your responsibility; you should look after them. And a peaceful livelihood.* *AnIkull ca kammantI.* Peaceful, non-contentious: **right** livelihood. There is quite a lot that could be said about that, obviously. [Pause] It's a livelihood that does no harm to other living beings - and no harm to oneself. I've gone into this in the course of the lecture on Perfect Livelihood in the series The Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path.

*Gifts and by Dharma wayfaring ...*

*DInan ca dhammacariyI ca.* DIna is generosity. Here we come to something very positive and, as it were, outward-going. With dhammacariyI we go even further, and come on to the specifically spiritual path. The word *dhammacariyI* is quite important for early Buddhism. [It is a key term] You get *dhammacariyI* and you get *brahmacariyI*, and later on in [the development of] Buddhism you get *bodhicariyI*, which is the specifically Mahayana equivalent. Literally *dhammacariyI* is practising the Dharma. It is following the path of the Dharma - following the spiritual path.

**Richard:** Woodward has: *\_Giving of alms, the righteous life.\_*

**S:** It's more than righteous in the purely ethical sense. *\_Righteous\_* suggests the ethical life; but *dhammacariyā* is really the Dharma life in the full [spiritual] sense. It's the Dharma faring, the Dharma practice. *Cariyā* means a going, a walking, therefore also a practising, a living. *Dhammacariyā* is a faring, or a walking, or a practising in accordance with the Dharma. It is living the Dharma life: putting the Dharma into actual operation. ... the care of kin Or, *\_to cherish kith and kin.\_* (Woodward). *\_Itakana\_ ca sangaho.* *\_Itaka\_* means a relative, a kinsman. It has been suggested that the word kind [as an adjective] came from *\_kin\_*. Kind behaviour was the behaviour you naturally used towards kinsfolk, towards people who are related to you by blood and in other ways - not towards people outside the group, outside the tribe. Later on such behaviour was extended to other people as well. In the course of the spiritual life it's gradually extended to everybody: in the spiritual life everybody becomes kin therefore you are kind to everybody.

*...blameless deeds ...*

*Anavajjini kammīni.* That's quite interesting. *\_Blameless deeds\_*. So who blames your deeds?

**A voice:** Karma?

**S:** No, it's a bit more straightforward than that. [Pause]. Well, it's other people. Other people blame you. But why should you bother what other people say? Why does the Buddha speak of blameless deeds, not just of good deeds or spiritual deeds?

**Graham:** *\_Blameless\_* is maybe stirring something up in people to bring out the negative emotions.

**S:** It's more the opposite of that.

**Richard:** It's just being good to people, I suppose.

**S:** No, it's more than that. Maybe we should refer here to the Abhidharma. Do you remember the [list of] skilful mental states. Do you remember what these were according to the Yogacara tradition? First was *sraddhā*, and then... What comes next?

**Sagaramati:** It's *hiri*, isn't it?

**S:** Yes, it's *hiri-ottappa*, as they would be called in Pali. So what are these? I talked about them down in London once, didn't I? *Hiri* is usually translated as shame. *Ottappa* is more like not doing something because it goes against your own conscience [and you would feel remorse if you did it]. *Hiri* is this, your ethical response to the expectations of the positive group. It's considered a very important quality. It presupposed [the existence of] a positive [i.e. a supportive and emotionally healthy] group, within which you were brought up, or within which you find yourself. You do not want to be blamed by the group: [because] you trust the group; you trust the judgement of the group. [After all] it's a positive group and is concerned with your genuine well-being. If you do something wrong - if the group blames you - well, you must be wrong [you think]: you've got that sort of faith in the group and it's norms. So you don't perform any deeds which the group may blame. [In the case of the Sangha] it's not, of course, and group in the ordinary tribal sense, but [a group that exists in] the spiritual context [i.e. it's a spiritual community]. Elsewhere [in the Scriptures] the Buddha says quite frequently that one [who is a worthy disciple] does not do anything for which others *\_who are wise\_* will blame him. One does not

wish to be blamed by the wise - because if you\_re blamed by the wise you really **have** done something wrong. But [at the same time] you don\_t always know for yourself, directly, what is wrong and what is right. So you [just] go by the reactions of the wise. You try, as it were, to live up to their expectations of you in a positive and healthy way. This is considered a very important ethical determinant: your sensitivity to the judgement [passed] upon you by those who are wise, those with whom you\_re in [positive] contact, i.e. the healthy group on the social level and the spiritual community on the spiritual level. Such a judgement is a judgement not in any hard or negative sense, but in a kindly sense. In the case of the [Western Buddhist] Order, if any particular Order member feels that something that he is doing is being blamed by the whole Order the chances are that it\_s wrong. Under very exceptional circumstances, maybe, it could be that the whole Order is wrong, and that the one individual is right; but I think that that would be very very rare. It\_s much more likely that the individual is wrong. [i.e. one individual as compared with a number of other individuals **qua** individuals, not with a number of other individuals falsely conceived as a corporate entity]. It\_s not that the Order comes down heavily on you, but that there is a sort of sensitivity and awareness on your part that, by virtue of something that you have done (or left undone) you have put yourself out of harmony with the Order and that, whether overtly expressed or not, the attitude of the Order towards you is in that respect one of \_blame\_.

**Richard:** I was reading about hiri today in *Mind in Buddhist Psychology*, and it suddenly occurred to me, Where does this idea of being a \_good boy\_ come in? You know, as in the article on *Leaving Mother and Initiation into Manhood\_* by Chintamani.

**S:** *\_Mother, mother!\_ That\_s where the good boy bit comes in. You want to please mother, and just please mother.. But it\_s not a question of pleasing mother. You\_ve got to please the elders of the tribe: that\_s where the positive group comes in. Just pleasing mother makes you a good boy. Living up to the expectations of the elders of the tribe, which are realistic expectations, well that make you a man.*

**Richard:** Presumably if you were to put a \_mother projection\_ onto the elders of the tribe then they would let you know what was going on.

**S:** Yes, indeed they would. If you try your boyish tricks with the old men they are just not interested. They don\_t react - they\_re not impressed - or they just take you down a peg or two.

**Lokamitra:** In trying to live up to the expectations of the rest of the group, or of the Order, it\_s sometimes hard to know whether we are simply transferring a mother projection onto them or whether we are acting as individuals.

**S:** The difference [between the two] is as the difference between the attitude of mother and the attitude of father. Mother is pleased whatever you do, because you\_re unconditionally her son - her little boy. But father wants you to grow up. Father\_s got more objective norms for you mother usually doesn\_t have. Even if you\_re a criminal, mother feels towards you in the same way as if you were a saint. It doesn\_t make any difference to her, in a way, whether you\_re the one or the other: you\_re still her son. Father will not feel like that. Father, if you commit really serious misdemeanours, may just refuse to have anything to do with you. Mother will never go to that extreme - not unless she\_s very much influenced by father.

Mother will forgive you whatever you do and, in a sense, accept whatever you do. Father will not. If he\_s a real father, a father in a healthy, objective way, he will insist that you live up to certain standards, that you develop and be a man, that you behave properly [i.e. like a real human being.] That is the difference. So if, in the case of the Order, a certain Order member is \_performing\_ [like a small boy] and the Order is just approving what he does, regardless of its nature, then they\_re behaving like

mother. But if they apply objective criteria, and are pleased with him when he does well, and **displeased** with him when he does badly, then they're being more like father - and therefore their attitude is more spiritual. Of course they're not being like a heavy, repressive father. I'm using the word father in a positive sense, as basically it should be used [Pause] Mother will forgive you anything; but father won't, and he shouldn't.

**Sagaramati:** Until you do something about it.

**S:** Until you do something about it. Mother will let you get away with anything. Father won't. When you are a small child you need mother's love, otherwise you don't grow properly: you need to be unconditionally accepted. But as you grow older you must be conditionally accepted. You're accepted by the men on condition you become a man. The men will not accept a little boy into their ranks. Mother will accept you. If you remain a little boy till you're fifty, sixty, seventy, mother doesn't mind: she's all the more mother, then. [Pause] That's how you tell the difference. Father is much more difficult to deal with for the child, for a son especially. Father imposes certain objective demands. Mother doesn't. That's why the boy has to be taken away from mother. Otherwise he won't develop. But mother is needed. Mother's part is not to be underestimated: that's indispensable, for the baby and for the small boy. But after that the father's part is indispensable too, and the part of the tribe, or the positive group, the positive community - and later on the spiritual community.

**Graham:** Does the spiritual community take over from father, in that when you've left home...

**S:** You could say that father takes over from mother, the community - in the ordinary social sense - takes over from the ordinary social community.

**Sagaramati:** One can still see little vibrations of these things still living and in existence. Although they've almost sort of passed away, you feel as if they're there on the verge...

**S:** Well, vibrations of what?

**Sagaramati:** Of this sort of development [from mother to father, etc] I remember being at home and how, when you were seventeen or whatever, you were suddenly dragged out into the pub.

**S:** Right. I remember this sort of thing too. When I was very young, when I was seven or eight, and then when I was ill, I was much more with my mother and my aunties, and my granny. But when I reached my early teens I started spending more time with my father. My father took me out quite a lot: I was quite lucky in that way. He was out of work for a while, and so he used to take me out walking on Wimbledon Common. When I was a little older he took me to the pub and I met his friends. Then I was evacuated - then I left school (of my own accord) - and then I got a job. In this way I started getting out into the wider world, and met a lot of other people. Then, of course, I was called up into the army, which meant an expansion of another sort, and after that, eventually, I came into contact with other Buddhists and, in a sense, with the spiritual community. Very often there is that sort of natural progression, even now. It may be [that it happens] in an uninstitutionalized kind of way, but it does happen, because [at certain levels of society] there's a residue of that basic, healthy - almost tribal-primitive human attitude.

**Sagaramati:** I feel there's a danger in the way people like us live - not people like us in the [FWBO] community but people who're wandering round a big city like London and who haven't even got the tribal thing.

**S:** Right. They\_re completely rootless, and because they\_re completely rootless they\_ll try to use us for the wrong sort of purpose sometimes. In a way that\_s all right we can be big enough to have these different levels but we must be quite clear which level people are attaching themselves to. They may be asking for ordination when what they really want is to be accepted by the group: or by father or even by mother. We must be able to sort that [sort of thing] out. [We must make sure] that this person really wants to commit himself or herself individually - [that] they\_re not even looking for father, much less still looking for mother, but that they want to commit themselves individually, with all that that implies. I think that [cases of] people attaching themselves [to the Movement] as it were on the wrong level, or [rather] mistaking one level for another, are happening less and less. The different levels are anyway quite well sorted out, at least in some people\_s minds.

So much then, for the mangala of *\_blameless deeds\_*

*To cease and utterly abstain from  
wrong ...*

*!rati varati p!p!.* *!rati* is simply abstaining and *virati* altogether removing yourself from *p!p!*, that is to say evil, wrongdoing. [The first is the result of the temporary cessation of unskillful mental states, as in the *samatha*, the second the result of their permanent cessation, which occurs only with *vipasyan!l*] This mangala represents the *\_negative\_* side of ethical life. [It consists in] altogether disentangling yourself from everything that is evil or unskillful.

*... Restraint in drink and zeal for things ...*

*Majjap!n! ca samyamo / appam!do ca dhammesu.* How does Woodward translate these two mangalas? *\_To shun intoxicants!; And steadfast in righteousness.\_* *This is a bit* interpretive. *Samyamo* is restraint or control, especially control of the senses: not allowing the senses to go blindly towards their objects. It thus implies awareness (*appam!do*), which comes up in the next part of the verse. *Majja* is anything intoxicating, especially any intoxicating drink. *Majjap!n! ca samyamo* therefore means restraint in the drinking of intoxicants. You notice that it doesn\_t say complete abstention, but only restraint, which is interesting. [If it is argued that *\_restraint\_* here does in fact mean complete abstention, it could be replied that it no more means that than, for instance, *\_restraint of the senses\_* means complete abstention from the use of the senses] *\_Zeal for things\_* is a very poor translation of *appam!do ca dhammesu*, and *\_steadfastness in righteous-ness\_* is not really any better. *\_Awareness in the midst of Dhammas,\_* or *\_mindfulness in the midst of Dhammas,\_* that is, with regard to Dhammas, would be a more accurate rendering - Dhammas in the sense of mental states, as in the first verse of the *Dhammapada*. *Manopubbangama Dhamm! / Manoseth! manomay!*, that is, *\_[All] mental states are preceded by mind, dominated by mind, made up of mind,\_* Or, in Abhidharma/Abhidhamma terms, *caitta dharmas/cet!sikas* are preceded by *cittas* as is the *citta*, so are the *caitta dharmas/cet!sikas*. [This was the interpretation given by my teacher Ven. Jagdish Kashyap. One could also understand dhammas (in *\_awareness in the midst of dhammas\_*) as *\_things,\_* as in the penultimate verse of the Mangala Sutta] Thus the verse as a whole speaks of (i) abstention from, complete dissociation from, everything that is evil, (ii) restraint with regard to intoxicants, and (iii) mindfulness in the midst of mental states, that is to say, with regard to mental states.

**Lokamitra:** Thinking about the fifth lay precept, the positive version of which is really mindfulness, it seems that it\_s not only [abstention from] drinking intoxicants but [also from] certain mental states that can have the same sort of intoxicating effect

**S:** There\_s a list of three \_intoxicants\_ in the [earlier] Pali texts - intoxicants in a more metaphorical sense. There\_s the intoxication of youth, the intoxication of health, and the intoxication of life. [The word for \_intoxication\_ here is *mada*, which is not from the same root as *majja*. It can also be rendered \_infatuation\_, or pride.] The [later] Abhidhamma texts give a longer list, including the intoxication of birth [i.e. \_Caste\_], intoxication of clan. You can see, therefore, what \_intoxication\_ means. Suppose you\_re intoxicated with youth. You feel, *\_I\_m young!\_ and you think that others are not young. You may even - as they do quite a lot in Finland - look down upon older people. You think that if you\_re not young you\_re nobody. You\_ve had it. It\_s the young who are where it\_s at! You\_ve taken, as it were, possession of by this fact that you\_re young, and that makes you a bit reckless, and a bit inconsiderate, and unmindful, and unaware. You\_re intoxicated by your own youthfulness. You forget that you too are going to grow old one day. You don\_t remember that; you don\_t think of that. In the same way you may be completely possessed by the fact that you\_re a very attractive and handsome, a very good-looking even beautiful - person. You find this with actors and actresses. They\_re very much into their own good looks, very much into their own powers of fascination, and the effect that they have on other people. They\_re really carried away by all that. This \_intoxication\_ is, in fact, very much like \_being carried away by\_ something.*

**Richard:** Is it a sort of infatuation?

**S:** Yes, it is, You can also be intoxicated by the fact that you\_re healthy and vigorous, or by your social position - your rank - or by your possessions.

**Sagaramati:** What about beauty? Beauty can be both subjective and objective. You can be intoxicated by someone else\_s beauty [as well as by your own], or something like that.

**S:** Yes, but in a different sort of way, I think. As regards intoxication, or infatuation, by possessions, there\_s a well known Indian story about a frog who found a farthing. I\_ve told it before, a long time ago, but you may not have heard it. A frog found a farthing, and was very pleased with himself indeed on this account. He hid the farthing in his hole, and sat proudly at the entrance, thinking, *\_I\_m very rich, very wealthy. I\_m the possessor of this farthing.\_* While he was sitting there an elephant came walking towards the frog and his hole, and of course he didn\_t even see the frog. So the frog called out to the elephant, *\_Stop! Don\_t you dare walk over my hole. Don\_t you dare walk over me. Don\_t you know that I am the possessor of a farthing?\_* But the elephant didn\_t even hear the frog, and just walked on over the hole. The frog was so enraged, the story goes, that he hopped along behind the elephant, trying to kick him. [Laughter] He was so infatuated by his own wealth that he lost all sense of proportion. This is the effect that infatuation has upon you. You become completely blind. The frog was so puffed up by the fact that he was the owner of the farthing that he dared to try to kick the elephant. [Laughter] *It\_s like Shakespeare\_s*

*man, proud man,  
Dressed in a petty brief authority  
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven  
As makes the angels weep.*

People become puffed up by their position. But it\_s purely external to them. It has nothing to do with their own innate powers.

**Graham:** What if the frog had used what he had in a positive way? I was thinking of people in the \_Friends,\_ and how they should be using what they have, rather than putting it down.

**S:** To depreciate yourself, and not appreciate - or not use - your own good qualities, that's the other extreme. [You depreciate yourself when you think] \_What can I do? **I'm** perfectly useless. I can't do anything.\_ There was a lot of that sort of thinking around in the early days [of the FWBO].

Alcohol intoxicates - surely - in a certain sense, but there are other things that intoxicate you and infatuate you **even more** - of which, in a way, you should be even more careful. This is the significance of the Four Sights, or rather, of the first three sights. The Buddha says that when [as a young man, before the Enlightenment] He saw the first sight, that of the old man, the intoxication of youth faded in Him. He realized that He too would grow old. When He saw the sick man, the intoxication of health and strength faded in Him, [He realized that He too was liable to sickness] When He saw the dead man the intoxication of life itself faded [and He realized that He too must die one day]. In this way the first three sights brought Him up against the fact of life with a sharp jolt and made Him more aware, more mindful, [and more open to the possibilities of the spiritual life, as represented by the fourth sight]

*Reverence, joy, meekness, gratitude,  
Dharma to hear in season due:  
This is the greatest luck.*

*Glravo*, the first mangala of this verse, is \_reverence,\_ as both Hare and Woodward translate it. It's even more than reverence. It's not only giving to others but also giving weight (*garuka*) as it were to them. Giving consideration out of respect - it's more like that.

**Gary:** How does it differ from worship?

**S:** I was wondering how it differs from faith. In the case of worship (*p3ja*) you realize the worth, or the value, of something but in the case of reverence (*glravo*) you realize its importance, its seriousness, its gravity. There's that element too. This is probably why Chalmers has translated *glravo ca nivlto ca* as \_reverent awe\_, taking *nivlto* not as humility but as reverence and not as a noun but, apparently, as an adjective modifying the preceding noun *glravo*, which he takes not as reverence but as awe. [In this way he makes one mangala out of two.] *Glravo* consists in your being impressed by the seriousness, the weight as it were, of what you are valuing and ascribing worth to. In a way it's a more weighty sort of word than *p3ja*. It consists in your being genuinely impressed, in really **feeling** the worth of something - not simply recognising its worth but [actually] feeling it as something of great importance that is almost weighing on you, as it were. It consists in your being deeply impressed. [Chalmers' \_awe\_, with its suggestion of the numinous, is therefore probably a better translation than Hare and Woodward's \_reverence\_.]

**Sagaramati:** It's more like something from the outside that comes in to you.

**S:** Right. In the case of worship it's you going out to acknowledge **its** value; but in the case of *garavo* or \_reverence\_ it's more like that particular thing, that valuable thing - impressing its value on you in a weighty sort of way so that, if you are open to it at all, you are **forced** to recognize it.

**Richard:** Is it not also being moved by something?

**S:** That too one can say.

**Lokamitra:** It's a spontaneous feeling towards something [coming] from outside, as it were.

**S:** The English word *\_reverence\_*, though a good word, is rather weak in this context. It's more like the feeling you get when you look up at some great mountain: you feel that it is very high, very sublime, and you're quite overpowered, quite awed. You're not just thinking, *\_What a wonderful mountain! How high it is! It's more than that. It's as if the mountain weighs\_* on you, dominates you you're [actually] **forced** to recognize its height, and grandeur, and so on.

**Graham:** I think the awe is even heavier if you intend to try and climb that mountain.

**S:** Oh yes, it becomes almost like a challenge. You realize what you are actually up against. [Pause]. There's that mountain - and you're going to climb it.

**Mark:** Would *\_veneration\_* be more suitable word for *gIravo*?

**S:** Yes. Veneration is a stronger word than reverence. [Pause] *NivItto* is more like humility [as Woodward translates the term], because it does complement reverence or veneration. It's not humility in the grovelling sense; but if you recognize the value and the weight of something, and really **feel** that as it were **weighing** upon you, then how do you feel about yourself? You feel humble. Even though you're going to scale the mountain, you still feel humble. It's a bit like in the Sevenfold Puja, when you get first the Puja and the Vandana [and the Going for Refuge] and then the Confession of Faults. You recognize the sublimity of the Ideal: therefore you worship and salute it; but then, having done that, you look at yourself, and you think, *\_How far short do I fall! And why? Because of this - and this - and this, which you proceed to confess. The confession is as it were complementary to the worship and the salutation. In the same way this gIravo ca nivItto ca is being impressed by the weight and grandeur of the Ideal and feeling, therefore, yourself correspondingly humble - as if you were being dwarfed by the mountain. But anyway, that's taking the analogy in a very limited sense, because you're also capable of climbing the mountain; you're also capable of becoming a mountain. So there's a certain confidence in the humility too. You're not crushed, even though you do feel humble. You could even say it's a sort of proud humility: you know you're going to be a mountain too, one day.*

**Richard:** Is it like sort of having no illusions about where you are at this particular time?

**S:** Yes - but it's also being confident about **where you can be**, if you only make the effort.

So that's *gIravo ca nivItto ca*. [Next comes *santu55hi*.] *Santu55hi* is *\_content\_*. You remember, that's the positive counterpart of *KImesu micchIcara* [or *\_sexual misconduct\_*]. I was thinking quite a bit about content recently, after Chintamani read us his latest article, in which he stressed the importance of receptivity, and pointed out that there was a connection between contentment and receptivity; if one was receptive, one could also be content. If you're not content, what happens? You try... But first of all, what **is** the state of not being contented? [Let us try to understand that.] It's when you're dissatisfied with the present, or dissatisfied with yourself as you at present are: you feel a sort of inner emptiness, an inner void. - in a negative, in a psychological sense. So you try to fill that: **therefore** the discontent leads to craving. You also start thinking about the future, and thinking about the past - to fill up the emptiness of the present. Thus time comes in too. You can't be receptive, because you're not even in the present: your mind is straying back towards the past or reaching out into the future... You find, therefore, that if you're contented you're receptive, you're in the present, you're *\_filled\_*. Whereas if you're **dis**contented you're in a neurotic sort of state of inner emptiness and frustration: therefore craving develops - you start thinking about the past, and anticipating the future, and you can't even receive in the present - you're blocking that too. Thus contentment seems to be a very important



quality. [Pause] And very few people are content... with what they have now, with what they are now. Because contentment isn't complacency [which is common enough]. It is a sort of full and genuine acceptance of **what** you are now and **where** you are now. If you accept that, then you can be receptive to what you **are** able to receive in the here and the now. So if you feel discontented, say if you feel bored, what should you do? Not start trying to fill that [emptiness] and to remove that [boredom]: just stop and experience it; but remain with it, remain in the present: at least you\_re in the present. If you can remain with it, and stop trying to remove the boredom by filling the void with something or other, then the boredom - the discontent - will slowly dissolve, and you\_ll feel more at peace with yourself, more at ease, and **then** you can receive. Or you might feel that there is something that you would like to do. [Pause]. I think that it is quite important, this content. [Pause]. If you\_re contented you\_re very much in the present, but **consciously** in the present - because you\_re always in the present, anyway.

**Gary:** If you were bored and you didn\_t. remain with the boredom but just sort of looked for something to do you\_d become alienated.

**S:** Yes: you are alienated from your boredom to begin with. You haven\_t really got rid of the boredom: you\_ve simply cut yourself off from it, or covered it up. So if you feel bored, that\_s good: you\_re right down to brass tacks, as it were. Just sit down and be bored! *Feel **very** bored.* But sooner or later the feeling will pass off, and you\_ll **feel** \_I\_d like to do this,\_ or, \_I\_d like to do that\_. But to start thinking, \_What can I do so as to get rid of the boredom,\_ that\_s fatal you won\_t be able to get rid of the feeling of boredom **in that way.**

**Lokamitra:** I find that if my energies are dissipated, what I tend to do is put myself into a situation where positive energies are drawn out. I suppose I have been with the boredom a bit, with the dissipation, but [in my case] it isn\_t doing nothing then: it\_s doing something, I find, that helps.

**Sagaramati:** There is a boredom due to a sort of stagnation of energy, in a sense.

**S:** Yes, that\_s true. But even then - usually, I think - you just have to stay with it until you get a sort of impulse to **do** something or other; but you shouldn\_t think what to do [i.e. shouldn\_t force yourself to do something on purely rational grounds before the impulse to do it has arisen]

**Graham:** One of the things that I\_ve found are quite easy to do in situations like that was to turn to something like music (it was fairly instant), and even after it I didn\_t feel very good, still: I felt worse, often.

**S:** Or yet another healthy sort of thing to do is to do the next thing to be done. Well, what is that? The washing up! *Just finish that off. Or go and wash your shirt, or say to yourself, \_Let\_s tidy things up\_ just the next thing to be done, in a very elementary, basic sort of way. If you have been feeling bored, and you just sit down until you feel a genuine impulse to do something, very often the first thing you feel like doing **is** just something like that;* but then that leads to something else, and that to another. In that way you start losing the sense of boredom, and your energies start flowing again. But if you start thinking, \_What wonderful, interesting thing can I do, just to get rid of this feeling of boredom...?\_ [Laughter] you can pick up the most interesting book, or go and see the most interesting person, but it won\_t work. The book will seem quite flat, quite dull [and the person likewise]. You must just give yourself time.

**Lokamitra:** Productive situations would be better than positive situations, because they would get the energies going again.

**S:** Yes, there\_s a sort of objective need, where you\_re not doing the thing just to get out of the state of boredom, but doing it because it needs to be done.

**Lokamitra:** Yes, And it does manage to stimulate something.

**Sagaramati:** There\_s a connection here between that and the first stage of the *Mettl BhIvana*. I feel that some or even most people - or I do anyway - find the first stage [of this practice] the most difficult, and that seems to be connected with that - with this sort of tendency not to accept where you are - your own emptiness - at the actual time. It sounds as if in the first stage - you have to start from exactly how you feel at that present moment: not try to grab after some occasion in the past when you've been happy.

**S:** Perhaps you have to start by actually feeling yourself, experiencing yourself, accepting yourself, and then **gradually** start feeling good and positive towards yourself; but not think, necessarily, that you can switch on the positivity **right away**: you have to **feel** yourself first - and it may be quite a negative, unpleasant self that you feel for a while.

**Lokamitra:** That\_s why it\_s quite good - you used to do this sometimes - before the *Mettl* starts to go over the body, just to get one physically in touch: I find it very helpful, with the class especially.

**S:** Yes, I did this sometimes. Just mindfulness of the body, starting from the tips of the toes, and the tips of the fingers, and working one\_s way right up to the head. Then you\_re feeling yourself, you\_re in touch with yourself. You can\_t feel goodwill towards yourself if you\_re alienated from yourself, and don\_t even feel yourself. So it may be a very angry self that you have to feel and experience first.

**Sagaramati:** That\_s another connection I've found, from taking the Sunday class - a connection between that and the last stage, [i.e. the stage of developing *Mettl* towards] the enemy. It\_s always the same people who have the same difficulties: [it\_s those who can\_t \_love\_ themselves] who don\_t have enemies. [Laughter] Everything\_s a bit too neutral.

**Lokamitra:** They just don\_t feel.

**S:** Or just don\_t allow themselves to feel. In the early days [of the FWBO] when we were doing the *Mettl BhIvana*, some people would say, when I gave my preliminary talk [explaining the practice], \_But I don\_t have any enemies. There\_s no-one I dislike, no-one I hate.\_ Sometimes I used to say, \_Well, in that case just look around within the family circle. It\_s probably there\_ [that you\_ll find someone that you dislike]. And you could see from their expressions, in the case of some people, that they knew at once that there was somebody within the family circle - even somebody quite \_near and dear\_ - whom they didn\_t like or whom they really hated. That\_s where the enemy was. But you don\_t usually think like that: you take it for granted that you like those who are near and dear to you; but it isn\_t necessarily the case. There may be quite an intense dislike for your father, or your brother, or your auntie, or your grandfather. One of our friends told me that when he was in his \_teens he and his brother used to hate their father so much that, when he had his afternoon nap, they used to creep up behind him and go through the motions of smashing the top of his head in with an axe. They used to really enjoy letting out their feelings in this way [Laughter] - hitting their father in imagination and killing him. They felt so violent towards him that, when they saw his bald head resting on the back of the chair, they couldn\_t resist it. Another of our friends, in fact an Order member, discovered that he really hates his mother. So you really do have to look amongst the so-called near and dear people [for your \_enemy\_]. In the light of these and a few other facts, I rather mistrust the people who say, \_ I

don\_t have an enemy in the world. There\_s **no-one** whom I dislike.\_ In the, very last resort it may be their own unfortunate self that they really dislike and take it out of.

**Richard:** It seems that there\_s not enough black-and whiteness around: there\_s not enough **hate**.

**S:** Neither hot nor cold

**Richard:** There\_s just this wishy-washy, **grey** sort of feeling that you have towards people. But I find that if I really hate someone I really start to love them, in a way, because there\_s something there: something tangible.

**S:** Well, I have sometimes said that it is easier to transform hatred into love than to transform indifference into love. You might think that indifference was nearer, but actually it isn\_t. At least when you hate someone, there\_s some **feeling** there.

**Gary:** It\_s funny, the hate and the love part of the *MettI*, the friend and the foe: they sort of swap pretty frequently.

**Lokamitra:** You often don\_t start to hate until you start to love and vice versa. When the *MettI* really gets going you discover lots of enemies. [Laughter] I certainly found this.

**S:** Very often there isn\_t enough - for want of a better term - **\_oomph\_** in people\_s emotions, whether positive or negative. They\_re not really full-blooded enough. They\_re neither full-blooded friends nor full-blooded enemies. They\_ll never do you down, but they\_ll never help you out, either. [Laughter].

**Richard:** What\_s that quote from George Bernard Shaw which you showed me? Something like, **\_The worst feeling you can have towards somebody is indifference.\_**

**S:** That\_s very true.

**Sagaramati:** You\_re just not acknowledging the person at all by being indifferent to them.

**S:** Right. It\_s the same sort of thing as ignoring: it\_s an emotional ignoring. That\_s why small children who\_ve got very active, [physically] demonstrative mothers are, very often, in a better and healthier psychological state, even if the mothers do slap them sometimes, or are a bit short-tempered: there\_s this emotional contact all the time nevertheless. Whereas a mother who just does her duty but is a bit indifferent, and not very demonstrative, leaves the child a bit cold and not very energized.

**Richard:** Kids seem to have this sort of - you know - when a kid hates he hates and when he loves he loves, There\_s just no two ways about it.

**S:** Yes. Very small children, especially, will say, **\_I don\_t like you!\_** [Laughter] *And you can see that they don\_t: it\_s quite open;* they don\_t try to hide it at all. Or vice versa: if they really like you they just climb on your knee and show it in no uncertain terms. When I was fifteen or sixteen I was staying in Torquay with some friends of the family, and the woman there had a little girl aged about four. For some reason or other, the minute this child set eyes on me she took an absolute fancy to me. She was always wanting to sit on my knee and talk to me. I just couldn\_t understand it. At fifteen or sixteen one isn\_t very interested in small children, and it was a bit of a nuisance. [But that was how it was] The child\_s instant liking for me was so marked that her father and mother and auntie all remarked on it. But children are like this. It might just as well have been an instant dislike, in which case she would

have shown it just as readily. Whenever she saw me she would start laughing [Laughter], she was so pleased, and want to sit on my knee. I wanted to read my book. [Laughter]. Children **have** got that sort of directness and adults, unfortunately, lose so much of it. You end up by not feeling. You become a bit atrophied in your feelings: you don't really respond or react. D.H. Lawrence has quite a bit to say about this, though he does go rather to extremes. He says things like, *Smack the child's little bottom and let the child feel your clean, healthy, hot anger.* That's taking it a bit too far.

**Lokamitra:** Perhaps that takes us back to what Sagaramati was saying about indifference yesterday. Equanimity, which is a sort of spiritual indifference, comes after developing *MettI* and the rest.

S: Exactly. It's a state of equilibrium. This is a very important point. Equanimity (*upeksha*) comes when you've developed your *MettI* (friendliness), *karunI* (compassion) and *muditI* (sympathetic joy) **equally** towards all. Suppose you like someone very much but dislike somebody else, then there's a bit of wavering [and to that extent no equanimity]. If the person you like comes into the room you'll be pleased and happy. If the person you dislike comes into the room you'll be unhappy. In this way there's an oscillation [between the two states]. But suppose you like everybody equally! *You'll be happy whoever is around. Your state will not change there* **won't** be that oscillation - and that is equanimity. Thus if you like everybody intensely - if you've got very strong *MettI* towards all equally - how can there be any mental wavering? The same with the *karunI* and the *muditI*. Thus the state of equanimity is that state of equilibrium and even-mindedness which comes about when you have the same positive feelings towards all, so that you have no preferences. You just like everybody equally, you're kind to everybody equally, and you rejoice in the happiness of all beings equally. By concentrating on the development of that equality- feeling *MettI* towards all equally - you develop equanimity. You don't develop equanimity by cutting out the *MettI* and trying to love fewer people. You develop equanimity by taking the love you have for this person and that and trying to love everybody as much as that. That is the difference.

Anyway, so much for *santu55hi*, content. Fourthly, there's *kata\_\_uta*, which is gratitude. Again, this is a very important *\_virtue\_* - for want of a better term. We went into it on one of the seminars I gave not so long ago. (Voices) Obviously gratitude should be left to spontaneous feeling. You shouldn't say to anyone, *Well you ought to feel grateful!* *Though often this is what we do hear. Gratitude should be a natural thing, and not*

- as it seems to be - a relatively rare thing. We used to notice this [absence of gratitude] in the early days of the *\_Friends\_*. People who came along to meditation classes and lectures didn't seem to feel any sort of gratitude. Some people did [actually] say, at one stage - very early on - that they were under the impression that there was some big wealthy foundation behind the FWBO that was paying for everything and that, therefore, it was [all] available, and supplied for free, and nothing was expected from those who came along. They were just the consumers as it were the FWBO was just something set up for their benefit, and they had no obligation towards it. Some people actually felt like that, and said so that was their impression.

**Lokamitra:** I think we must be quite careful not to give that impression still.

**Mark:** Especially when we've got things like *\_Sukhavati\_* and Centres all over the place.

S: What I call the consumer mentality is very strong nowadays in Britain. Everything is to be supplied, and piped into your mouth. All you actually do is open your mouth, and whatever you want will be piped or pumped into it.

**Richard:** Even if there was a big foundation behind the *\_Friends\_*, that's still no reason for not feeling

grateful.

**S:** No... Even if there is a big foundation, we should pretend there isn't [Laughter].

**A Voice:** There might be one.

**Another Voice:** I wish there was!

**Third Voice:** [Whispers] I'm glad there isn't! [*Much Laughter.*]

**S:** I did remark, when I was at *\_Sukhavati\_*, *\_Just imagine. Suppose some wealthy donor had come and said, 'Here's your \$50,000. Just give the contract to some building firm and get the work done.' It just wouldn't have been the same, would it?\_*

**Lokamitra:** It wouldn't! *Raising the money and building a place has broadened out the energy which is required to run something like that. If we'd been given it, we wouldn't have been able to use it.*

**Richard:** Well, this is what happens. You see these gurus coming over. They have lots of money, they set up these big organizations, and they're just five minute wonders.

**S:** Also, it's being goal-orientated rather than process-oriented. You're grabbing at the goal, or trying to buy the goal; but it's the process which is as important as the goal itself. In a way, the process is the goal. Even when you've got your *\_Sukhavati\_*, what are you going to do? You're not going to just stand there and admire it. It's got to be something which is functioning. By [your] actually working on it and creating it, it is in a way already functioning - and then it can continue functioning. Because there isn't a day when you just stop, and everything is done, and there's nothing to do after that. No, that's just an imaginary dividing line. It will just go on. You might have a sort of opening day to mark the achievement of a certain stage; but the process is [still] going on it's absolutely continuous.

**Lokamitra:** The process of becoming ...

**Sagaramati:** We always tend to think that some time in the future there is this pensioned-off heaven. [Laughter] You sort of drop off somewhere, and then there's nothing else to do.

**S:** As I said to Subhuti, the people working at *\_Sukhavati\_* don't realize they're not working for it: they've got it already! *But they don't know that - that's why they're enjoying it so much. But actually they've got it already. Their getting it is in the working for it.*

**Lokamitra:** You said that generosity should be spontaneous. But *DIna* is a practice to encourage that, to bring that out.

**S:** That is true. But it's very difficult to have a practice for gratitude. You can, of course, express your gratitude verbally, and say, *\_Thank you very much.\_*

**Sagaramati:** You can sort of intellectually acknowledge the fact that you have something to be grateful for and do something, even if you don't actually feel it because you're a bit blocked.

**Lokamitra:** You have said that it's not only negative feelings that are blocked but often positive ones, and that it's necessary somehow to bring those out.

**Graham:** Sometimes the negative ones are not even negative. They\_re things that, because of the society we live in, are put on us, and we are told that they\_re negative.

**S:** Several people have remarked on the fact that many criminals, especially younger criminals, seem quite healthy people. They\_re sort of rebelling against certain things, and maybe in a sense they\_ve done wrong, but there is a healthy sort of energy in them which is just dashing itself against certain limitations.

**Sagaramati:** I often think that about John - one of the kids who throws stones through the windows of the Archway Centre. He always seems a lot healthier than most of the people who come to the Centre [for classes and lectures]

**S:** A \_devil\_ rather than an \_angel\_ [in the Blakean sense of these terms]

**Sagaramati:** Yes, with a glint in his eye. [Pause]

**S:** Anyway [in the first two lines of this verse] there are these our qualities which are [enumerated as mangalas or auspicious signs]: reverence (that\_ll do for *gIravo*), humility, content, and gratitude. They all seem to run together, don\_t they? They seem very much associated. Then [in the next line] there is *KIlena dhammasavanam*, timely hearing of the Dharma, or as Hare translates it, \_Dharma to hear in season die.\_ [This is mentioned next] because the hearing of the Dharma links up with contentment and receptivity. \_Hearing\_ is very, very important in Early Buddhism. The disciple is the hearer, the *SrIvaka*, \_the one who hears.\_ The learned person - or the word we translate as \_learned person\_, is *bIhusruta*, the one who has \_heard much\_, listened much, taken in much. *Dhammasavanam* is just \_hearing the Dharma\_ - or better still, \_listening to the Dharma.\_ When you listen to the Dharma you\_re taking in, you\_re being receptive. [Pause] This is one of the reasons why [ceremonial] chanting is so beneficial in its effect. If you hear the Pali texts chanted, and understand the meaning of it, it\_s quite an experience - particularly if it\_s well chanted. It\_s like some archetypal voice uttering these timeless truths and you just hearing, just taking in. You don\_t have to think about them. You just take them in: just receive. Such truths sound quite different [when heard] in that sort of way - or they **feel** quite different. There\_s a recording of *Dhammapada* and other verses made under the direction of Dr. Ambedkar by leading North Indian musicians and singers. It\_s really beautifully done. I wish I could get hold of that recording. The verses are so beautifully chanted half chanted, half sung. It really is as though some archetypal voice was enunciating the truths taught by the Buddha and you were just listening and taking it in - completely passively - and absorbing it. You didn\_t have to think: thinking wasn\_t necessary.

**Sagaramati:** That\_s why the readings [from the Scriptures] on festival days, in the context of the puja at the end [of the celebrations], are so much more potent.

**S:** Right. But this sort of chanting is even more effective than a reading.

**Sagaramati:** Even though you don\_t understand the language?

**S:** No. I did say, \_If you hear the Pali texts chanted, **and understand the meaning of it.** If you don\_t understand the meaning, there\_s **some** effect; but it\_s much greater if you do understand the meaning - if you actually understand what is being said. Otherwise you only hear the sounds: you don\_t hear what is being said - you don\_t hear the meaning - and it\_s the meaning that\_s more important. In all Buddhist

countries the lay people like to listen to the monks chanting, in long sessions... sometimes all night. They just like to hear it. They sit there quite contentedly, hour after hour, listening to the sound of the chanting. They may not always understand the meaning of the words, but it has a beneficial effect nonetheless. In Sri Lanka (Ceylon) the chanting of suttas by monks is a regular feature of the daily radio programme. Even in this country we can listen to chanting on tape. I remember Sanghamittī telling me that she played the tape of the Sevenfold Puja every evening, and just sat and listened. Sometimes she might feel a bit depressed, but the tape would always help. She didn't have to make any effort. All she had to do was switch on, sit back, be receptive - and **just listen**. Even in the case of reading you have to make a slight effort, but you don't have to make an effort to listen - if the volume of sound is adequate. So you can be totally receptive in that situation. It's hearing the Dharma [that is important]: you hear it before you understand it. If you don't really hear it, don't really take it in, there's no question of understanding it either. Just to hear, just to listen, just to take in, is very important.

**Richard:** It says here, in the Woodward, *\_To hear the Norm at proper times...\_*

**S:** *Kllena* is *\_timely\_*, or *\_duly\_* (Hare) or, as Woodward has it, *\_at proper times\_*. This brings up another important point. There's a right time and a wrong time for listening to the Dharma. So what would be the wrong time? **Could** there be a wrong time?

**Richard:** Yes, **could** there?

**Sagaramati:** I think if you were in a negative state...

**S:** Clearly according to the text there **can** be a wrong time!

**Lokamitra:** When you are not receptive.

**S:** When you are not receptive, and when you are not really going to be hearing. [Pause] When you're not in the mood as it were.

**Lokamitra:** You must be prepared to open yourself! *A few years ago* [before joining the FWBO] I used to go to a meditation teacher. Once, I remember, a lad who was quite new to the class just sort of sprawled out on the floor, just lay right back. I felt quite angry, and told him to sit up. I was quite shaken by the rudeness of his behaviour.

**S:** I've talked about this sort of thing in one of the seminars. [When you behave like that] you're not really being receptive. It's not that you're lying back to take it all in. You're lying back to show you don't care particularly: you're *\_not impressed\_*. I've talked about this in the excerpt *\_On Formality and Informality\_*, from the Hui Neng Seminar [*Shabda December 1975 issue*]. *The \_informality\_ is a pseudo-informality - [an attitude adopted]* just to show that you are not impressed. This means that you're not being very receptive.

**Richard:** You're just sort of super-cool.

**Sagaramati:** The super-cool is also tied up with the indifference. All these things seem to fit...

**S:** Yes. Alienation. Discontent. Lack of receptivity. Ungratefulness... The whole lot [Laughter]

**Sagaramati:** If we ever have a western Abhidharma the list of the negative emotions is going to be incredibly long.

**S:** It's long enough even in the eastern Abhidharma.

**Sagaramati:** We'll completely outstrip them. [Pause]. This means we'll have to find more positive qualities to counteract the negative ones.

**S:** Right. So this mangala is *klIena dhammasavanam*, 'listening to the Dharma at proper times', or 'in a timely manner'. It doesn't mean that, if you were really listening to the Dharma, you could be doing it at the wrong time. But you could be going through the motions of listening to the Dharma while in fact you were not doing that. When you're only able to go through the motions, that is not the time to be doing that sort of thing.

**Richard:** There are supposed to be certain times - I'm thinking about meditation here - when it's particularly auspicious to meditate. Has that anything to do with this?

**S:** It could be **brought** into connection with it, though I don't think there's any connection intended. When you're in a highly meditative state it's good to call to mind the words of the Dharma, because in that state you are particularly susceptible and impressionable and receptive. You can then turn those words over in your mind: that is a particularly good time to 'hear' them. This could be considered a more and more timely hearing of the Dharma. It's more timely because you're more receptive. If you're not receptive, it isn't timely.

*Patience, kind words, to see good men,  
Duly on Dharma to converse  
This is the greatest luck*

*Khant2* is here translated as patience, but it's more like forbearance. There's the famous example in the *Jitaka* Book - referred to also in the *Vajracchedik1 S3tra* - of the monk *Khant2*vadin, 'Preacher of Patience' or 'Preacher of Forbearance'. When his limbs were severed from his body by the enraged king of Kalinga he did not feel any anger he practised **forbearance**. *Khant2* is forbearance rather than patience.

**Graham:** What is forbearance?

**S:** Absence of retaliation. Somebody does something to you, or against you, which would normally make you angry and cause you to retaliate, or at least want to retaliate; but you don't feel any anger: you've no desire to retaliate. This is forbearance. [Instead of retaliating] you forbear.

**Graham:** When I was quite young I never used to retaliate. Could that be forbearance?

**S:** It's only forbearance if you don't have any anger to express. If you feel angry but [nevertheless] don't act it is not forbearance in the Buddhist sense, Though it may be in the ordinary worldly sense.

**Richard:** It's not that you're gritting your teeth and saying, I'm not going to hit you. I'm practising patience. In a sense there is no reaction at all on your part.

**S:** There is a reaction, but it's a positive reaction. You feel goodwill towards that person. That is



forbearance.

/Intideva has a great deal to say about this in the *Bodhicaryavatara*. He regards *ksInti*, forbearance - or patience, as you **could** possibly translate it, as **the** antidote to anger.

**Richard:** It's called the greatest asceticism, isn't it?

**S:** Yes. *Khantiparamam tapo titikkh*. This is the *Dhammapada* [verse 184].

**Sagaramati:** How would you start to practise in that way? Suppose you are in touch with your anger [i.e. you are not emotionally blocked], and you come across a situation where your anger is really aroused.

**S:** According to /Intideva there are various reflections [that you can encourage]. \_Why should I get angry? Suppose someone has struck me: what does that mean? Two things are involved. There's his stick, and there's my body. These two things coming together produce the pain and suffering [which I feel]. He has taken up the stick, so he is responsible for that half [of the transaction]; but who has taken up the body? [Laughter] The body that I have taken up comes into collision with the stick that he has taken up. He's no more to blame than I am. [Laughter]. I am no less to blame than he is. How ridiculous of **me** to be angry with **him!** /Intideva has a number of such reflections which make you realize how foolish and stupid it is to be angry with somebody.

**Sagaramati:** Gritting your teeth wouldn't actually be a practice, would it?

**S:** It would be the first stage. You have to go step by step. First of all when someone hits you, you feel anger; you retaliate: you hit back. But then, once you've realised that that isn't the right sort of thing to do, you can at least check your anger midway. You may actually have seized the stick and be ready to beat him, but then you think in time [and check yourself] - or at least you don't hit him as hard as you might have done otherwise. Well, this is some improvement. Then at a later stage you come to a point where you feel quite angry but know very well you are not going to do anything about it: you just don't allow the anger to express itself. It's not that you're repressing it, but [that] the anger runs its course in your own mind and then, after a while, you feel only a little anger - hardly anything at all. Maybe in the end you don't feel any anger. You just think, \_Poor chap! *Never mind. His action is understandable. You just don't really mind at all.*

**S:** That's *khanti* then, the antidote to anger.

As the next mangala there comes *sovacassat*. How is that translated [in Hare]? \_Kind words\_. It's [really] more like \_good speech\_, or even sweet speech\_.

**Richard:** Woodward has \_soft answer\_.

**S:** Perhaps he's thinking of \_the soft answer that turneth away wrath\_. [Pause] It's pleasant speech, soft speech - not soft in the sense of weak, but [in the sense of] gentle, kindly. [It's the quality of being \_well spoken\_.] The meaning of this mangala is obvious.

*Sama71nanan ca dassanam:* the sight of the samanas

\_To see good men\_ is much too general. The *samanas* are, of course, the ascetics, the mendicant

monks, the Buddha\_s [full-time] disciples who\_ve gone forth as \_wanderers\_. The very sight of them is a blessing, is a sign of good luck. What does that mean? The word *dassana* or *dar0ana* is a very important one in India. [It means] just looking just being inspired by the sight of somebody. In India they just go and \_see\_ the holy man: they just go and sit and look at him. In India it\_s not considered impolite to look at people at all. Sometimes people pass you in the street and if they\_re a bit interested they look at you like this [Laughter]. Without any sort of hesitation they can spend a couple of minutes just looking and staring at strangers. [Laughter]. Indians really do this. They gape at you, and gawk as you pass, standing in the middle of the street and doing it at leisure. [Laughter]. You can see their jaws dropping and their eyes popping. [Laughter]. When they\_ve fully satisfied their curiosity they turn away shaking their head. [Laughter] You can actually see what they\_re thinking - they make no attempt to hide it whatever. In the same way - but in a very different spirit - you go and have the darshan of the holy man. The holy man just sits there. Sometimes you have professional holy men who sit there and do nothing else: they just sit there for you to look at them. In the case of a genuine holy man the darshan is an actual [spiritual] experience. There is no need for words, no need for discussion. You just sit and look. The most famous exemplar of that [kind of darshan in modern times] was, of course, Ramana Maharshi. (I\_ve spoken of this a number of times.) He just sat on his *gaddi*, as it\_s called, and he sat there for about forty years. People would come and just look at him and \_have darshan\_ as it\_s called. They had his darshan, or \_took darshan\_. This sort of contact - this eye contact - just looking - is considered very important.

**Mark:** This could inspire you to realize what benefits - what actual physical benefits - could be gained by following the Path. \_See what it\_s done for somebody!\_

**S:** Right. But it\_s not only that. Darshan sets up a sort of communication between you. In connection with one of the first Tantric initiations I had one of my teachers told me that according to the Sutras the disciple, [when] in front of the teacher, must look down: he must not look up - at the time of the ordination especially. It is considered rather bold and presumptuous on the part of the disciple to look up [on such occasions]: he should keep his head well down out of humility. But in the case of Tantric initiation **not** so. He should look at the teacher: he should look the teacher in the face. You see the difference of approach? This is because it is a sort of communication, even a sort of initiation, just to look. Hence this *dassana* or *dar0ana* of the *samanas* is also an auspicious sign.

**Graham:** Can\_t looking sometimes be a bit of a strain? I often feel I strain people by looking at them.

**S:** Assuming it isn\_t their [own] fault, it\_s sometimes that **you** are staring. Looking is not staring. It\_s not giving them a prolonged suspicious stare: that\_s not what is meant. It\_s looking in a **relaxed** way. It isn\_t **fixing** them with your glance.

**Lokamitra:** It\_s not just looking at them, too. It\_s taking them all in, and feeling, and sort of experiencing them.

**S:** You may not have your eyes actually focussed on them. It\_s not that you try to fix them with your hypnotic stare and \_hold\_ them - as I sometimes say in connection with the communication exercises. You just look, and sometimes you also - quite naturally - look away. But you\_re still aware of them, even when you look away. You still feel them there.

**Richard:** I see what Graham means, though. It\_s not just a question of staring. After all, you can look at beautiful scenery: why not at a beautiful human being? Often if you say \_Oh look at that!\_ *the person you\_re drawing attention to sort of shrinks away*.

**S:** Perhaps that's an element of self-consciousness coming in. Ramana Maharshi certainly didn't react in that way. [When you looked at him] it was just like looking at a mountain - except that the mountain looked at you and smiled. He wasn't in the least self-conscious. There wasn't the slightest trace of anything like that.

**Sagaramati:** Lawrence goes into this type of self-consciousness in the *Fantasia of the Unconscious*.

**S:** He also goes into it in connection with education - with the mother stimulating in the young child, prematurely, what he calls the personal consciousness, which is the self-consciousness in this sort of sense. You get this more with little girls than little boys. *‘Oh isn't she pretty! Isn't she sweet! Come and do your little dance, darling!’ You know, things like that: making the child very self-conscious. [Pause] Making her a real little Shirley Temple. I remember when I was a boy all the mothers wanted their daughters to be like little Shirley Temples. They used to have Shirley Temple frocks and Shirley Temple curls and all sorts of things. There were thousands of little Shirley Temples all over London. [Laughter].*

Then *Klenna dhammasIkacchl*. *Klenna* is, again, *‘timely’*, and *dhammasIkacchl* is *‘discussion of the dharma’*. Woodward has a really dreadful translation of this mangala. He renders it *‘Pious talk in season due’*. *SIkacchl* is simply conversation, talk, discussion, and the addition of dhamma doesn't make it *‘pious’*. It's talk about Reality, talk about the Truth: discussion about the Truth. *‘Pious talk’* is a really classic example of the completely wrong type of translation [that gives, a completely wrong impression of the Buddha's Teaching.]

**Gary:** What is pious?

**S:** Pious means religious in a goody-goody sort of way. At least, that's what the word means for people nowadays. It wasn't the original meaning of the word in Latin. [In classical times] *pietas* was a quite important [ethical and spiritual quality]: it was a bit like reverence. But in modern English parlance piety means a rather pseudo, rather affected, goody-goody sort of religiosity - the sort of thing you associate with old ladies and prayer books. *‘Wasn't it a lovely sermon, dear! I liked that bit about the flowers, and Jesus. It was really nice.’ [Laughter] That's pious talk. ‘And what a lovely hymn! I do like that bit about the blood of Jesus. I feel so clean and pure afterwards.’ I have heard people talk like this, in my younger days. ‘Now we must all be good children!’ You hear it on the radio sometimes [in religious broadcasts]. Dhammasakaccha is not that sort of thing. It is something very searching, very deep, very real. It is discussion about the Truth, about Reality, about the Norm.*

**Richard:** There's a text - isn't there? - the *KathIvatthu*, that is translated *‘Points of Controversy’*.

**S:** Yes. *KathI*, which is similar in meaning to *SIkacchl*, is translated as *‘controversy’* here, though maybe *‘discussion’* would have been better, because as Mrs. Rhys Davids, one of the translators, points out, there's no violent argument [in the work]: just discussion [between the followers of different schools of Early Buddhism] about certain topics, certain *‘points’* (*vatthu*). *KathIvatthu* is therefore *‘Points of Discussion’*, or *‘Topics of Discussion’* rather than *‘Points of Controversy’*.

**Sagaramati:** There aren't any conclusions, even, to many of them.

**S:** No there aren't. In many cases the topic of discussion is left unsettled. The Pubbaseliyas think this, the Sabbatthivadins think that, but the Theravadins think something else. Full stop.

**Richard:** What you said about what *dhammasIkacchl* really means reminded me very much of the

Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines, where Subhuti is discoursing...

**S:** In modern India there's a particular kind of [Hindu] religious performance called *kathā*, where someone gives his own version of an episode from the *Rāmāyana* or the *Mahābhārata*. He gives it at great length, and with much elaboration, taking the part of all the different characters in the story in turn. Every now and then he bursts into song, a chorus joins in, and then when they have sung together for a while he goes back to the telling of the story. This sort of performance is very popular, especially in north-western India.

**Graham:** He just sings about anything whatever?

**S:** No. He sings about what he has been discoursing on. Suppose it was the story of R1ma and S2ta. At great length - much greater than in the original text - he'd describe how R1ma came back to his hermitage and found that S2ta was missing. He'd describe how he'd looked this way and that, searching for S2ta, and he'd also act the part of R1ma a bit to make the audience feel R1ma's grief at the loss of his beloved wife. Then he'd burst into song - R1ma's song for the loss of S2ta. The rest of his party would come in with the chorus, and if the song was a popular one the audience might join in too. This part of the performance would go on for perhaps ten or fifteen minutes, then it would sort of die away and the *kathā* would come back to the story and relate what happened next, interspersing his discourse with various subsidiary stories, anecdotes, and jokes - even with comments on political affairs - all of which are very popular with village audiences. (In Buddhist countries much the same sort of thing is done with the *Jātaka* stories.) Some *kathā*s are very highly skilled: they keep the whole thing going hour after hour, and everybody gets very, very absorbed. The more professional of them travel around with highly trained choruses, complete with drums and cymbals. When they all come in at the right moment - very dramatically - they quite carry the audience away. People listen to this sort of thing for six or eight hours at a time at night. There will be tens of thousands of people, even, if there is a famous performer of *kathā*.

In Thailand the bhikkhus sometimes teach the Dharma in this sort of way. There are two bhikkhus at a time, and they sometimes go on all night, alternately, one questioning the other. Some bhikkhus are highly skilled at this sort of thing and do it in a slightly farcical, knockabout manner - almost like a double comedy act - just to make the Dharma interesting to ordinary people. Suppose they are telling a *Jātaka* story. One bhikkhu will ask, Well, what happened next? What did the Bodhisattva do then? This is to create interest and suspense. The other bhikkhu then says, He did this, and he did that, to which the first bhikkhu replies, Oh no, surely not! But wasn't that wonderful! [Laughter] In this way telling of the *Jātaka* story proceeds. I haven't witnessed this type of performance myself, but some of my Thai bhikkhu friends have described to me the scene in the temple where it takes place. The two bhikkhus are seated on thrones at the far end of the hall, on either side of the altar, and the talk is tossed like a ball between them. [Laughter]. Everybody follows with great interest and attention. Where the whole population is Buddhist, as it were, and people are on different levels of intelligence, you need different kinds of presentation of the Dharma. The bhikkhus have therefore introduced this sort of thing. They don't have songs in between - that's not permitted - but the Hindus do have them, and that makes **their** performances even more effective. The Tibetans, of course, have their so-called mystery plays, many of which are based on *Jātaka* stories, and these too are very effective. All this can be regarded as coming under the heading of *dharmakathā* or *dharmasākacchā* - talk or discussion about the Dharma.

*Ardour and godly life, to see  
Truths Ariyan, to know the cool:  
This is the greatest luck.*

*Tapo ca brahmacariy1 ca.* Looking back [over the ground so far covered], you notice that from verse to verse there's been a sort of progression. If you look back at the verses we did yesterday [i.e. verses 1 - 7, including the devat1\_s question] this becomes all the more clear, all the more evident. Now [with the present verse] we come to the more specifically - for, want of a better term - \_monastic\_ life-because even a lay person [who lives at home with wife and family] can practice forbearance and right speech, can have the sight of mendicant monks, and can discuss the Dharma. With *tapo ca brahmacariy1* however we come to the more specifically spiritual life which it is difficult for the layman to lead . So *tapo* and *brahmacariy1*. I discussed both these terms in London recently, didn't I. Do you remember? I pointed out that the word *tapo* or *tapa* (Skt. *tapas*) is from a verb meaning \_to heat\_. It's a sort of incubating psychic heat that you generate within yourself by the intensity of your [spiritual especially meditative] practice and which causes the hardness and rigidity of your [psychological] conditioning to melt, as it were, so that something new is brought forth, something hatched. The analogy - the implied analogy - is with the hen sitting on her eggs and generating a lot of heat and, in that way, hatching the eggs so that the chicks burst forth. We usually translate *tapo* or *tapa* as asceticism, but basically it has the meaning of heat, and represents the same kind of inner experience as the Tibetan *tumo* or \_psychic heat\_. [*Tumo* - Skt. *cand112* or \_Fiery One.] Where there's heat, there's energy; where there's energy - sufficiently powerful energy - there's heat, which is a sort of radiant energy. It's very interesting that the Indians think of what we call asceticism in this sort of way. I talked yesterday about *pu\_\_a* as the \_vibration\_ set up by a good action. It's very much like that. It's as though the intensity of your effort \_radiates\_, as it were, or is incandescent, just like an electric bulb. You \_light up\_. The English word asceticism conveys a completely different idea, doesn't it? \_Tis strict austerity\_ - this is the translation Chalmers gives. Hare translates \_ardour\_. Ardour is quite good, because like *tapa* it is a word basically meaning heat. Yes, ardour will do. The word is not really quite strong enough, but *tapo* is certainly ardour more than asceticism or austerity.

**Lokamitra:** I've always associated with austerity a sort of withdrawing from outside [activities] and concentrating on yourself, so as to build up this sort of inner heat.

**S:** But that isn't the meaning the word has in ordinary parlance. If you say of someone that he is an austere sort of person you mean that he is a bit dry and grey, a bit hard and unsympathetic - even aloof and forbidding. That's what an austere person means. Not someone who's working on himself and generating inner psychical or spiritual heat. We speak of the traditional Scotch minister as being an \_austere\_ man. *Brahmacariya* (Skt. *brahmacarya*) is a quite interesting word. Often it's used in the sense of celibacy [i.e. chastity], but this is only its secondary or applied meaning. Brahma is \_high\_, \_noble\_, \_sublime\_ - even \_spiritual\_; and *cariya* is \_walking\_, \_faring\_, \_practising\_. *Brahmacariya* is therefore the \_noble faring\_, or the \_lofty course\_, or the \_sublime practice\_, especially in the sense of the faring or coursing in, or the practice or experience of, the noble or lofty states of higher meditative consciousness. I've talked about this before, haven't I? I've said that there were these three terms: *brahmacharya*, *dharmacharya* and *bodhicariya*. As I explained then, *brahmacharya* was the more general \_Hindu\_ term, the term current in the Buddha's day, which the Buddha took over for the spiritual life. The more specialised Buddhist term, which He and His disciples may have started using later on, was *dharmacharya* in the sense, specifically, of the practice of **His** spiritual teaching. *Bodhicariya* was the practice of the more specifically Mahayana form of Buddhism. *Brahmacharya*, *dharmacharya*, and *bodhicarya* are thus progressively more specialized terms. *Brahmacarya* denotes the practice, or the life, which is based upon high or noble states of consciousness - which is expressive **of** those states, especially the states which we experience in meditation. It is the spiritual life as distinct from the worldly life. *Dharmacharya* is not just the living of the righteous life. It's the practice of the Dharma in the sense of the practice of the Truth, the practice of Reality. It goes beyond the *brahmacharya*. [It is the transcendental life as distinct from the spiritual life] As for the *bodhichariya*, it

goes even beyond the *dharmacarya*. It is the practice of Buddhahood [i.e. the practice of the Bodhisattva ideal as distinct from the Arahant ideal.]

*Tapo ca brahmacariya ca, ariya sacca dāsaṇam*: The *ariyasacca dāsaṇam* or *to see/Truths Ariyan* ties up very much with the *dharmacarya* and with the *bodhicariya*, because it is the *ariyasaccani*, or *Noble Truths*, which you see, or of which you have the *vision (dassana)*, as you are walking and practising, whether that walking and practising is *dharmacarya* or *bodhicariya*. [In the case of the *bodhicariya*, however, one also *sees sunyata* or *Emptiness*]

There's quite an important point [to be dealt with here] in connection with the first Noble Truth, that is to say the Truth of dukkha or suffering. It is important because it is quite often raised by beginners. I don't know if any of you have encountered this. People say, *According to Buddhism everything is suffering. But everything isn't suffering. I lead a quite happy life. I don't suffer.* This supposedly *disproves* Buddhism, as Buddhism says *Everything is suffering*: that is the first Noble Truth. What do you say in reply to this?

**Sagaramati**: It's potentially suffering. If I talk about it, I talk about limitations. Like a rubber ball in a room, worldly existence is pretty limited and you tend to bounce around.

**S**: Ah, but Buddhism doesn't say anything about potential or actual. It says everything is suffering.

**Lokamitra**: In its **ultimate** sense it's unsatisfactory.

**Sagaramati**: From the point of view of the transcendental...

**S**: Yes, from the point of view of the Transcendental. This is where the *ariyasacca* comes in. [The first Noble Truth is] how you see things when you have that transcendental Vision. It's not how you experience things through the senses and the sense-consciousness. It's not the feeling but the *seeing* [of existence]. Even if you have a happy experience you *see* that as [ultimately] dukkha, because you see its limitations..

**Sagaramati**: It would be much better to use another word than *noble* for ariya.

**S**: Sukha, or pleasant experience, is *painful*, not in the sense that it is a painful **experience**, but that it is *seen* to have its limitations. So it's the *ariyasaccana dāsaṇam*, the *sight* or *vision* of the Aryan Truths that we are concerned with here, the word ariyan [Skt. aryan] indicating that transcendental level [of awareness] you can only *see* the Noble Truths if you are a noble person, an Ariya: that is, you can only see them with *insight*. This is a very important point. Buddhism doesn't say that everybody experiences everything as suffering all the time [and that this is the Noble Truth of Suffering]. Obviously they don't. But in the ultimate perspective, as disclosed by insight, or to insight, it is seen that nothing conditioned is completely satisfying. You can have the experience of something quite pleasant, like eating a sandwich or a cake and quite enjoy it: the experience is pleasant, it's sukha; but [at the same time] you see with your insight that it is dukkha. The universality that is posited of suffering is in the insight, not in the actual feeling of dukkha.

**Graham**: This could be a point for action: to see that life in itself is not perfection.

**S**: Well then you won't be bothered unduly about things, even though you do enjoy them. You know they have their limitations - they don't last for ever - so all right, you enjoy them; but you're not

attached to them: they finish; you don't expect them to last.

**Richard:** It seems that things like dukkha are interpreted really wrongly, e.g. \_you\_ve got to suffer to develop.\_

**S:** Oh yes, \_Suffering is good for you. I shall help you, I shall make you suffer.\_ [Laughter] You get a touch of that in Zen, don't you? (Agreement.) \_It must be doing me good: it's really hurting.\_

**Mark:** I noticed that attitude very much at the Buddhist Society the one time that I went there. The bloke who was taking the [Zen] class seemed to be infatuated with the idea of whacking you on the back with a stick.

**S:** I think it's a leftover from the Christian tradition of guilt, and wanting to punish yourself. [If you are interested in Buddhism you go along to the Zen class and get your punishment there!]

**Lokamitra:** This sort of interpretation [i.e. that suffering is good for you] is one of the major things which holds back Buddhism in the West at present. There are so many so-called Buddhists, or people who claim to be Buddhists, who give this sort of impression.

**S:** It was certainly the impression that was around the Hampstead Buddhist Vihara when I arrived [in 1964]. *It was really terrible.*

**Lokamitra:** So many books give it too, and it's this which gives the name of pessimism to Buddhism.

**S:** This is also why people sometimes get baffled [by Buddhism]: because of their own assumptions. They go to a Buddhist country and they find that everyone is cheerful and happy, and they think: \_But they're not supposed to be happy! They're supposed to be Buddhists. They're supposed to believe that everything is suffering. They even tell you that everything is suffering - with a big, beaming smile.\_ [Laughter] *Western visitors just can't understand it. The [Christian] missionaries can't understand it. \_These people are always happy; but they're supposed to be pessimists - radical pessimists. They are the **gloomy Buddhists**.\_* Actually, it's the Christians who are the gloomy people - and they're supposed to have heard the Good News. [Laughter]. They're supposed to be rejoicing in the Lord.

One must therefore remember, in connection with *ariya-saccIna dassanam*, that the fact that, in the ultimate sense, everything is suffering, is a Truth that discloses itself only in the perspective of the Transcendental Vision.

*NibbInasacchikiriya* ca. Nibbana is of course Nirvana, and *sacchikiriya* is realization, so that this mangala consists in the realization of Nirvana. Hare renders it \_to know the cool\_. That's rather misleading. There's a Pali idiom for the attainment of Nirvana which is \_to become cooled\_, *sitibhavati*, and Nirvana itself is \_coolness\_, *sati-bhava*. This is quite a beautiful metaphor for a hot country - to think of Nirvana as \_coolness\_ and the attainment of Nirvana as the \_cooling down\_ of the heat of passion, the heat of rage, the heat of anger. Nevertheless the term used here is not *sita* but *nibbana* is literally a \_blowing out\_, an extinction, but with the implication not of annihilation but of a reversion to a previous, more subtle state. The Buddha Himself used the analogy of the flame of the lamp: when fuel and wick are exhausted, the flame goes out. The attainment of Nirvana, He said, is like that. When the five grasping-*skandhas* are no longer there, no further mundane existence is produced: the \_lamp\_ goes out. This was read [by some Western scholars] as meaning that on the attainment of

[Nirvana - word inserted by S2labhadra missing from the original text] there was total extinction [for the individual concerned] forgetting the old Indian belief that when a fire went out it didn't cease to exist but reverted to a subtle state. After all, when you kindled fire, where did it come from? It had to come from somewhere! *The Indian idea was that there was a subtle fire which manifested* [itself] when you struck the iron against the flint and produced a spark. But the fire was there behind, as it were, all the time. When a fire goes out it just reverts to that latent or invisible state. That was the Indian way of looking at things. So the extinction of the lamp, of the flame of the lamp - did **not** suggest to the ancient Indian an absolute and complete extinction but simply a reversion to a previous, more subtle state. This sort of idea would have been at the back of the Buddha's mind when He spoke of Nirvana in this sort of way [i.e. as extinction]. Not that He meant that when you gained Nirvana you went back to a more subtle state of existence that you had enjoyed before you were incarnated, as it were. Not that. But there was the [definite] implication that what took place was not complete annihilation. The extinction was relatively superficial: it was the extinction of greed (*lobha*) , hatred (*dvesa*) and delusion (*moha*). There was a substratum, as it were, which was pure, and which remained. Nirvana wasn't a state of total annihilation.



*With mind unmoved when touched by the world,  
To be grief-freed, dust-freed, secure  
This is the greatest luck.*

This is a sort of expansion of the last mangala of the previous verse, i.e. \_the realization of Nirvana. *Phu55assa lokadhammehi cittam yassa na kampati* is not quite \_With mind unmoved when touched by the world.\_ A more literal translation would be \_He whose mind (*citta*) is not made to shake by the *lokadhammas* (plural).\_ So what are the *lokadhammas*? There are supposed to be eight of these, the traditional list being: success and failure, glory and disgrace, praise and dispraise, happiness and suffering. These are sometimes called the pairs of worldly opposites, and between them the mind oscillates. If you experience success you become elated; if you experience failure you become sad and downcast - and so on for the rest of the *lokadhammas*. The mind oscillates because your experience is changing all the time. Sometimes you experience happiness, sometimes suffering, sometimes you\_re elated, sometimes depressed. All the time you\_re oscillating between one or another pair of opposites, or between all of them at once. This is the sort of state that you\_re in. So the Buddha says, \_He whose mind is not made to shake\_ (*kampati*), or oscillate, or quake - it\_s the same word as earthquake (*pathavikampa*) - whose mind is not upset or disturbed - when touched by, when experiencing, the *lokadhammas*, or eight pairs of worldly opposites, but whose mind is, on the contrary, *asokam virajam khemam* - this is the greatest mangala, the greatest good luck or the most auspicious sign. Asoka is \_free from grief\_; *viraja* is free from the dust of the defilements. *Khama*, which is quite an important term, is more difficult to translate. It\_s patience, but in a rather special sort of sense that I find quite difficult to define. The best I can say is that it\_s the \_patience\_ of the artist with his material. It\_s also connected with \_love\_. When the artist is moulding his clay he\_s very patient. He loves his material. He works it very slowly and patiently into the shape that he wants. In the same way you\_re working on your own life, you\_re working on other people or with other people. You don\_t get upset, you don\_t get ruffled, you don\_t react: you just carry on, very patiently, in this sort of way. That is Khama. It\_s not patience in the sense of persevering and just **sticking** at something. It involves that too, but it\_s more like the patience of the artist who is patient with his material and understands it. One could translate this whole verse by saying: \_He whose mind does not shake or quake when touched by the eight worldly dhammas, or pairs of opposites; he whose mind is on the contrary free from the dust of the defilements, and patient - this is the greatest blessing. i.e. that sort of mind is the greatest blessing.\_

We have come now to the very top - the greatest of all blessings, the greatest of all auspicious signs. We can\_t go any further. The Buddha therefore continues

*They who live thus see no defeat,  
And happily go everywhere  
Theirs is the greatest luck.*

*EtIdisIni katvIna sabbatha-m-aparIjitI.* \_Those who do thus, who see the auspicious signs [enumerated in this Sutta], are everywhere undefeated.\_ Undefeated by what or by whom?

**Voices:** Mara.

**S:** Mara, you could say. They are certainly not defeated [morally or spiritually] by the world. *Sabbatha sotthim gacchanti.* \_They go happily everywhere.\_ Mara can\_t overcome them. Wherever they go, they are [perfectly] happy. They experience - they receive - the real good luck. They\_ve seen the real auspicious sign. Happiness is really coming their way - **has** come their way: they\_ve already got it. *Tam tesam mangalam uttamam.* \_**Their\_s** is the greatest blessing, the greatest good luck.\_ Progressing from one mangala to another, they\_ve come all the way up to Nirvana, the ultimate mangala - to the perfectly calm, stable, and pure mind. [They\_re now perfectly happy, perfectly free]

There's quite a lot in the Mangala Sutta. [Laughter] There are said to be thirty-two mangalas in all. I've never actually counted them, but I take that to be correct. You could have a whole series of talks on it, couldn't you? Say one talk on each verse [or even on each mangala].

**Lokamitra:** It's tremendous, this Sutta! *It's so rich, for study and so forth!*

**S:** It also chants very well, by the way.

### ***Acknowledgements***

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Mangalam