

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

Seminar based on the CHAPTER OF THE SNAKE from the SUTTA NIPATA held at 'Pundarika' over five evenings in 1975 with the Venerable Sangharakshita

Various people attended during this period.

Khema, Luvah, Siddhiratna, Padmapani, Lokamitra, Padmaraja Suvrata, Dhammadinna, Sagaramati, Marichi, Anoma, Mahavira, Subhuti, Hridaya, Vimalamitra, Jitari, Vessantara, Chintamani, Asvajit, Mangala, Alaya, Nagabodhi, Kamalasila, Mangala, Vangisa, (Jinamata?) and possibly others still unidentified.

S: All right, so for the next five, throughout the evenings, were going to try to get through, I won't say as much of the Sutta Nipata as possible, but as much as the first chapter of the Sutta Nipata as possible. There are five chapters in all and in each chapter there are a number of Suttas in verse form. Sometimes these Suttas have been called ballads. They're very much that in a way because it's as though the very early Buddhists, the disciples in the Buddha's own day, for the most part used to chant and recite them as they moved around, as a means of spreading the Buddha's teaching. So they're not only in verse form they are almost like sort of spiritual ballads, which were often recited by the roving disciples in this way. And, as I think most of you know, the Sutta Nipata is one of the most important Buddhist documents that we do possess. Its important historically inasmuch as it seems to belong for the most part, or at least for much of it, to the most or almost the most, primitive substratum of the canon. There is in fact one particular chapter, not one that we are going to do, I think for the course of these five evenings, a chapter of the eighth, which may well be the most primitive part of the canon. Certainly among the most primitive parts of the canon, as regards aged authenticity. We know this or we can infer this, because other parts of the canon which are themselves quite ancient represent monks as actually reciting this whole chapter, which suggests it was put together very, very early indeed in the course of the history of Buddhism, certainly during the lifetime of the Buddha. So we can be sure with regard to much of the Sutta Nipata that it possesses this sort of age and authenticity. So that with the Sutta Nipata, though more in some cases than in others, because it does also include quite a few fairly late verse Suttas, which certainly post-dates the Buddha's own life. But we can be certain that in the Sutta Nipata much of the time we've got a very ancient, really primitive presentation of the Buddha's teaching. We do know for instance that the Buddha passed on to his disciples quite a few lists of terms. But the teaching wasn't entirely in lists, or even parables, by any means. There were these ballads in circulation. The Buddha himself may have composed some we just don't know. It's much more likely, I think, that disciples who were gifted in this way, just reduced the Buddha's teaching to sort of ballad form so that it could be easily remembered, chanted and spread around. And we do know for instance, that the Buddha, according to the Theragatha, encouraged the disciple Vangisa to put his teaching into verse. We know this. So it seems highly likely that others disciples, now anonymous, did the same. So that quite a bit of the Buddha's teaching in those early days was circulated in [2] this form. And some of the most attractive, of some of the oldest of those ballads, as it were, some of them highly philosophical, especially in the chapter of the eights, were in circulation in this way, in this form. So this is the sort of material that we're dealing with. So we get very close to the Buddha Himself in the Sutta Nipata, part of the time, very close to his actual teaching historically and even very close quite often to the actual wording. Maybe not always the wording of the Buddha, but certainly in many cases the wording of people who had heard the Buddha, who had listened to the Buddha. And they paraphrased his teaching in their own words, but keeping pretty close to the essence of the matter and using much the same

language that the Buddha Himself has used. As I mentioned earlier, the language, the Pali of the Sutta Nipata, is usually very rich. It is not like say the Pali even of the Majjhima Nikaya and the Digha Nikaya also, it's much richer, it has a greater variety of terms and even grammatical structures. As some scholars have suggested it comes closer than any other form of Pali to Vedic Sanskrit. Vedic Sanskrit being very rich linguistically speaking, as compared with the later, though still very rich, classical Sanskrit. So we're on very ancient ground here: we're in much the same world as we are in the case of the Udana and the early section of the Itivuttaka. Sometimes we're in an even more ancient world than we are in the case of those scriptures. Especially with regard to the Chapter of the Eights but we're not going into that of course. I'd like to get through as many as we can of these Suttas of the first chapter, the Chapter of the Snake, and we'll find that each Sutta deals with a very important and, as it were, central, topic which is still central and so important to us today. So we shall either deal with one sutta in detail and in depth I hope in the course of the evening or with two if the sutta's are a bit short. So let's start straightaway then on this particular sutta, 'The Snake'. Would someone like to read it straight through so that we get the general feeling of it, maybe talk about the sutta as a whole to begin with and then go through it again verse by verse and discuss each verse, maybe each line. It's not very long.

___: 'Who checks the spread of risen wrath As salves the venom of a snake, That monk quits bounds both here and yon As snake his old and worn out skin. Who passion wholly cutteth off As gatherer lake-grown lotus blooms, That monk quits bounds both here and yon As snake his old and worn out skin. Who craving wholly cutteth off And dries its swiftly flowing stream, That monk etc ... Who pride doth wholly sweep away As flood a fragile bridge of reeds, That monk etc ... Who in 'becomings' finds no pith As seeker in fig-trees no flowers, That monk etc ... In whom there only lurk no spites, Freed from becoming this or that, That monk etc ... In whom uncertainty is quenched, Cut short within, so none remains, That monk etc ... Who neither hastes nor lags behind, Hath all this hindrance overcome, That monk etc ... Knows of the world 'All is unreal', Knows without greed 'All is unreal', Knows without passion 'All is unreal', Knows without hate 'All is unreal', Knows undeluded 'All is unreal', That monk etc ... In whom no leanings lurk whate'er, Who roots of wrong hath rooted out, That monk etc ... In whom no yearnings lurk whate'er, Cause of return to these bounds here, That monk etc ... In whom no longing lurk whate'er, Forces that forge becoming's bonds, That monk etc ... Who of five obstacles is rid, Gone stir, doubt crossed and barb-immune That monk quits bounds both here and yon As snake his old and worn out skin.'

[3]

S: Well, what sort of general impression do you get from this Sutta as a whole?

Voice: It's mainly saying what's to be got rid of.

S: Yes, mainly saying what is to be got rid of. Or, not in a sense, what is to be got rid of, but what one will have got rid of. He's talking about the bhikkhu, presumably the ideal bhikkhu. He's not even saying he should do this at the right time. He says he does it, it's natural and spontaneous, something that happens when the time is right and then of course in comes the comparison, you know, which gives the title to the Sutta 'The Snake'. It's like the snake sloughing off his old skin and we come here of course to a very primitive and archaic motive indeed don't we, that of the snake? And the snake who sheds his old skin, and emerges as a bright new shining snake. We find this in all mythologies, all religions, all traditions and the students of mythology tell us that primitive man was deeply impressed by this fact. That you

saw this new snake, as it were, reborn from the old and you saw him as going about with just a few shreds of the old skin, you know, hanging from his body and underneath you saw the new shining skin of this apparently rejuvenated or renascent snake. So it's against that sort of background that you must see this Sutta. It isn't, as it were, negative in the way we might usually think just reading these words. Reading these rather negative expressions. The bhikkhu is just like the snake that shed off his old skin. And he's a bright new shining snake. So that doesn't suggest anything negative you've got the bhikkhu not just reduced to nothing, now that he's got rid of all these things you've got this bright new shining person this new man, as it were, going around with just these little bits and pieces of the old self sort of hanging from him. He's practically emerged from them, maybe he's entirely emerged from them. So, that's the sort of image, well that's the sort of picture that is presented.

Voice: A very healthy process.

S: A very healthy process, yes. But we mustn't press the analogy too far, or too literally. I mean the snake we know sheds his skin automatically. It doesn't have to think about it. Every year, as far as I know he acquires a new skin - he sheds the old one. I believe after his winter sleep or something like that. But in our case, you know, we don't shed our old self just by growing older. Though perhaps we do to a very slight extent. As we grow older we do to some extent just by the sheer friction of experience, the sheer sort of stress of experience. We do change somewhat, but not nearly enough.

Voice: Can you say that we mature?

S: You can say that we mature yes that's putting it in a positive rather than in negative terms, we do mature. But even that maturity which we achieve, and it's a definite achievement simply by growing a bit older, that is if we are just even, moderately thoughtful, moderately reflective, and if we do learn a little bit from experience, even that isn't nearly enough. We've got to shed our skins and shed ourselves in a very much more radical sense than that. So we mustn't press the comparison too closely or too far. So we shouldn't think simply in terms of what is given up. Not just in terms of the old skin that is shed, but of the new 'snake' that emerges, the new man that emerges. This is implicit, is not brought out very clearly here. I mean, very [4] often in Buddhism at this stage, the positive side is not brought out so clearly, or so explicitly. It may be simply because people felt it so much they didn't need to. We don't feel it so much, for various reasons. So we need to bring it out more explicitly and more fully even to emphasize even to place a stress on it. So that we don't get a purely negative impression, certainly isn't intended. So you're supposed to be like a reborn snake, as I said, bright and shining, golden and glistening. And of course we know that in Pali, the Pali texts in the Theravada scriptures, the Arahant is sometimes called the Naga. The serpent is a synonym for the Arahant.

Voice: It also gives the impression that these things, these more negative things are sort of eternal that it also comes off when your done, like warts ...

S: Yes, they're adventitious

Voice: (?) we intend to think of our negative feelings (?) deeply rooted inside us that we can't (?)

S: Well in a sense it is, perhaps you know, in psychological terms it goes very deep. But perhaps in spiritual terms it doesn't go very deep at all.

Voice: Not really original sin.

S: It's not original sin. Or not in that precise Christian theological sense.

Voice: It gives quite a positive counter balance to that psychological viewpoint.

S: Right, yes. That you shouldn't think only in terms of the outworn skin. But as I said you know, in terms of the new snake that emerges, the reborn snake that emerges. But the text itself doesn't say very much about that. The new born snake isn't described in any other terms except to say that he leaves behind his old skin. In a way this illustrates very well a certain approach of, for want of a better term, the whole Theravada, or even the whole Hinayana tradition. It is negative in its terminology. It does speak in terms of giving up, does speak in terms of checking and overcoming. It does speak terms of renunciation but we have to see what is implicit in that. We have to remember it's just like getting rid of the old skin of the snake. But there is a new snake underneath. There is a new snake emerging. This is not brought out explicitly, but its certainly intended. So in a way it's a bit characteristic that, or a bit significant, that this particular Sutta, 'The Snake' comes right at the beginning. As if to say that in the course of the Sutta Nipata you'll have quite a few negative descriptions. Descriptions of the spiritual life in terms of giving up this and giving up that, and getting rid of this and getting rid of that. But don't think that that is really the last word. Don't forget the snake. You may see a whole series of skins which have been shed, one by one lying all over the place. But there is a snake that has emerged from underneath all this. That snake, as it were, goes on. The snake is the Arahant, the snake is the Buddha, the snake is the new man. [5] But the Pali scriptures don't go in much for positive straight-forward descriptions of that new man. They leave you more to infer what he is like from what he has left behind. They don't say, 'Oh he's abounding in love' they say he has given up hate.

Voice: Why do you think that was?

Another Voice: I was just going to say surely that is very often a method in which one speaks anyway. I mean one refutes very often. Though it doesn't mean to say that that is psychologically negative. I think maybe we confuse it with that. I mean this is only a method of refuting which is just a method of seeking.

S: Not even refuting, dealing with what is actually there.

Voice: So it's not the same as psychologically negative, or hang-ups or anything of that kind?

S: No, because, I mean the skin goes far beyond anything of that sort. It includes for instance the five nivaranas.

Voice: I mean I often get the feeling that you know by saying something in this negative way I feel very free.

S: Right.

Voice: I mean I've only to say well not that, not that, feel better, feel better.

S: This is one or has been one of the complaints against the Pali scriptures and in a way the Theravada teaching, that it is very negative. But it's only negative if you just direct your attention to the form of the terminology or the way in which things are put, but the underlying intention is completely positive.

Voice: But I think one feels that from it.

S: Well, not everybody seems to have done in the past, or we may do so but, what I hope are obvious reasons that you know, quite a few other people in the past, people writing about Buddhism, seem not to have felt the underlying positivity as all, and have complained that Buddhism is very negative.

Voice: Could it be that they were just so keen on getting rid of this idea of a self?

S: You mean, the Buddhists were so keen?

Voice: Yes. Or that might be a modern interpretation. I mean the idea is sort of, smells of self, sinking in somewhere.

S: I don't think they were over-afraid of that, because if you take this particular image of the snake literally it suggests a self. But they seem not to be bothered by that.

Voice: Is that quite a modern thing?

[6]

S: Yes. Some of the, especially Sinhalese Buddhists seem to have quite a thing about the self and about the non-self. They're always insisting that Buddhism teaches the non-self, which is quite true. But they insist in it in such a way they seem to be unduly worried about it and afraid to use any other terminology or mode of expression even when it would be quite helpful and not open to misunderstanding.

Voice: Wasn't this the result in present day?

S: I don't really think so. I think in their case its more on account of their, themselves, losing touch with what that whole sort of way of thinking and speaking really spiritually signifies.

Voice: Like almost Western emotions.

S: Yes almost that yes. They approach it almost as a Westerner would but with their traditional loyalty to Buddhism so they really press this Anatta thing without really asking themselves what it signifies or without any feeling for it in fact any more. This is what I felt myself quite often when I've been talking to them. They hit you over the head with Anatta. I remember, you know, a very amusing instance when I was in Sarnath on a certain festival occasion two young Indians were ordained as Samaneras. So after the ordination there was a feast for the bhikkhus. So about an hour after the ordination in the midst of this feast we had a terrific sort of uproar coming from just a few yards away. The samaneras of course hadn't been given their meals because bhikkhus were served first and they were served afterwards.

We heard the voice of the samaneras raised in argument, or one of them. Well his voice was raised in argument and he'd seized hold of the nearest Brahmin, and he was shouting at him about Anatta. He was saying 'what is the Atta, show it to me, where is it? Come on, what is its work?' and he was sort of shouting at him in this highly aggressive way. And all the older monks that were smiling amongst themselves, 'well, he's really sort of trying to show the Brahmin that he's a real Buddhist now.' But the whole way, his whole way of doing it was, you could say, quite assertive, not to say egoistic. The way he'd seized hold of this unfortunate Brahmin almost collared him, as it were, and was almost shaking him and asking him to produce the atma and show it, it did in fact really exist. But you know this is the attitude of many of the 'good' Theravada Buddhists. But the way in which they speak about anatta and the way in which they support and defend anatta, so they're not in touch with what that really spiritually represents. There's no selflessness in their attitude at all. So it doesn't matter if you use the language of selfhood provided you use it in a selfless way, and your feeling communicates something of selflessness - that's much more important.

Voice: Is there not a general tendency for Sanskrit and maybe Pali as well, I don't know, to express quite positive ideas with negative words?

S: It does seem that there is this and the connotation is positive. For instance a mention in connection with English we sometimes have this 'immortal' not 'mortal'. But when we just say immortal, we don't think of it as a negative expression [7] at all. Many of the grammatically negative Pali expressions are rather like this. Like they were 'anatta' the 'immortal' for 'nirvana', translated often as the deathless, which sounds a bit negative because death comes first. 'Anatta' is, sounds just like our immortal; conveys quite a different impression.

Voice: ... in the translation?

S: In some ways we do, yes, in fact quite a bit.

Voice: In that case also wouldn't our interpretation of it as being something negative in the psychological sense, not rather reflect on us then, you know, the text as such?

S: It probably would, it probably would, yes. Though admittedly in the case of some of the later books of the Pali Canon we noticed this when we were studying the Itivuttaka we felt a real negativity creeping in. A negative attitude toward the spiritual life which we didn't feel in the early chapters of that same work. As though, for want of a better term, a real negativity did start creeping in, at least in some circles. And maybe that's one of the reasons why there was the later as it were, more positive Mahayana movement to counteract that, to introduce again a more truly positive emphasis. I think in a way even Mrs Rhys Davids sort of missed the point when she protests against the overall negativity of the spiritual ideal in the Pali tradition. I think even she didn't sufficiently realize that a great deal that was positive was implicit, and that's what we find here. So we should think not so much in terms of the old skin left behind but the new snake that has emerged. I mean old skin means new snake. Anything else that we notice about the sutra as a whole?

Voice: Could you tell me if this is the original metre?

S: I think it is. It's not a very easy metre. No it isn't, not exactly but, sort of. See if I can read this - 'yo uppati tang venati kodang.' That's the metre. 'Who checks the spread of risen wrath!'

No it isn't quite like that, in Pali it's more like dah dit dit dah dit, dah dit dit dah dit. But it's near enough I think you need not quarrel with that. Any other general questions before we start going through verse by verse? And, of course the sutta is talking about the bhikkhu. The bhikkhu is, as it were, the ideal person at this stage. Hare translates monk which isn't at all good. Chalmers translates more literally 'almsman' because that is literally what the bhikkhu is. Bhikkhu means 'one who subsists upon alms'.

Voice: How is the word monk not ...

S: Well because of the Christian associations. We get monk, monkish, monastic, monastery. Yes, whereas the bhikkhu was simply someone who would, left the household life, who dissociated himself from family, tribe and so on, from caste. And who just wandered from place to place wearing a ragged yellow robe, or it wasn't even a robe, it was just a ragged yellow dress. He just wandered from place to place, walked from place to place. And once a day or sometimes twice a day he went from door to door in the nearest village or the village through which he happened to be passing, he just begged some food or he just stood outside the door held his bowl in his hand and people put some food [8] in the bowl. Then he retired to a nearby mango grove, ate it and so on. So in a sense, there wasn't anything in our sense very religious about this. The whole feeling that one gets, not only from this literature but from say the Upanishads, is much closer to the Greek tradition. Not that the Greeks had an institution like this, but the Greek seriousness about life, and what does life mean, and what's it all about? It wasn't religious in our sort of pious, devotional sense. It had nothing to do with that. And incidentally, the sort of difference was brought home to me very very strongly, only yesterday, when Cintamani and I went to see the 'Golden Age of Spanish Art' at the Royal Academy. Has anybody seen this? It really was in some respects, an eye opener. Some of the paintings were extraordinarily good. Mainly those by Velasquez, those were really absolutely outstanding. I really felt is one of the great artists of the world. Murillo tried very hard but he didn't quite get there, though one or two paintings by Murillo were really good. But there were quite a number of 'Immaculate Conceptions'. Virgin Mary's with moons and lots of stars and it was really absolutely astonishing the expressions on their faces. They were self-conscious, simpering, attitudinizing, it was absolutely unbelievable. So, if that is religion, or any part of Western religion, or Western religious tradition well, there's absolutely nothing like that, certainly in this place of Buddhism. So one should never use words which you know, to the general public, suggestions of that sort. And I think 'monk' is one of those words. Though it is not one of the worst words by any means. But one really felt completely sort of alien to that sort of attitude, that sort of feeling, that sort of emotion. I wouldn't describe as religion, not in the sense that I use the word. But a lot of people think of that as religion and religious, and that's what they call to mind when we use words like religion, unfortunately. But it's a real education just to look at those things. Cintamani and myself, we just couldn't help laughing, it was absolutely unbelievable. There were three or four or them in particular, were not so very well known Spanish artists. And there was horrible little cherub-like figures, it was incredible that anyone could have put them in a so called religious painting. They were absolute little horrors. (laughter) Some of them looked positively mongoloid. And especially, there was a really weird little painting of the human soul in between vice and virtue. And they were all represented as most hideous little babies. It's really extraordinary. And there was this simpering human soul looking a bit towards 'baby vice', and rather ignoring 'baby virtue' (laughter). It looked really horrible. But this sort of feeling, this sort of sentiment is historically quite important and quite prominent in their Western, as it were, spiritual tradition. This is all come from reformation stuff. When people revolt against religion or they

don't want to have anything to do with religion, it's partly because of things like this and we have to respect that sort of feeling.

Voice: (unclear) occurred to me like a worm (unclear) it's like a worm wriggling in pain.

Voice: Cherubs usually seem to be quite pagan actually.

S: Well these were not, they were neurotic little, little baby heads, mostly with little wings attached. [9] But one of the things that struck me about (?) like a very sort of healthy landscape, lakes, trees.

S: Yes, the symbolism is very natural, yes, the lotus. I mean it's all so interesting though we're going a little ahead here. 'Who passion wholly cutteth off as gatherer lake grown lotus blooms.' So, you're not only trampling on the lotuses you're simply plucking them. And your passions themselves are compared to lotuses. They're not compared to weeds, they're not compared to deadly-nightshade, but even your passions. I don't know what is the word then in Pali? Let's have a look. (pause) 'Raga: Raga is sometimes translated 'lust', sometimes 'passion', it's a very powerful word in Pali and Sanskrit. That passion, that 'raga' is compared to lotuses. So you just pluck the lotus. You don't even tear it up by the roots you just pluck it. I mean, it's a beautiful thing but it has its limitations - pluck it.

Voice: There's also a gatherer.

S: A gatherer yes.

Voice: (?)

S: Maybe that would be carrying it a little too far,

Voice: Well, it is a gatherer.

S: Yes, its true he does but let me look at the facts. He does gather the lotuses but not that he's going to sort of you know, as it were, keep them.

Voice: May be lose them somewhere?

S: Well maybe, you know decorate the shrine if you liked. But the whole sort of feel and the whole attitude is sort of natural. And there are healthy natural images. There's nothing twisted nothing perverted, the text though is quite uncompromising and quite austere. It doesn't say 'tear up these nasty stinking weeds of the passions and burn them!' It says 'pluck the lotus, pluck it! don't let it go on growing there, just pluck it'. Which seems much more healthy you could say. But make no mistake about it you pluck it. Useful as it may be, you may admire it, it may look really beautiful all pink and white growing there, but you pluck it.

Voice: Can you tell me what this word 'gatherer' is then?

S: Let's have a look. (pause) (obigaha) which means sort of, taking away. It's more like taking away than plucking, yes.

Voice: Taking away views or weeding?

S: It doesn't say that. Yes, it doesn't say that. We mustn't press these metaphors too much you know, that's literalism.

Voice: (?) is it 'raga'?

S: 'Raga'.

Voice: Isn't that used in a positive sense, I mean, compassion?

[10]

S: It can be though that is of course very much later on in Indian Buddhism, yes. In the Tantra of course even raga is used very positively in a quite different context. In this context it isn't used in that sort of way. Sometimes one speaks of raga, dvesa, moha, not lobha, dvesa, moha - passion, anger and delusion rather than craving, anger and delusion.

Voice: This, the word 'bhikkhu' here is used as a synonym for stream entrant isn't it, not just bhikkhu?

S: Well we don't even know whether that sort of differentiation existed at that stage. This is a very early stage. It may well have existed but the text itself says nothing about this, this particular text.

Voice: It seems to define the stream entrant.

S: In what way? If anything it's defining the Arahant. I mean the bhikkhu's given up everything.

Voice: Sorry, I meant the Aryan disciple not just the stream entrant stage.

S: The disciple in general can be an Arahant because if you sloughed off all these things well you seem to have sloughed off everything. The bhikkhu is an Arahant. In other words there's no distinction apparently at this stage within the context of this Sutta, between the bhikkhu who is a stream entrant and the bhikkhu who is an Arahant. It's as though you know, it's so uncompromising, the ideal is fully realized so fully presented you don't even think in terms of intermediate steps. You've just that, you're just there! The bhikkhu is one who sloughs off all these things that's that. The bhikkhu is the Arahant. In those days every bhikkhu was an Arahant. There were no stream entrants you only spent a few minutes as a stream entrant, at the most. You didn't need that classification, you're right there. [At] the beginning of the Buddha's speech, you know, you were an ordinary person. Half way through, you know, stream-entrant. By the time he's finished speaking you were an Arahant. So were at a very high-powered stage of Buddhist history. And at that stage these distinctions are very, very much less important. The Sarvastivadins distinguished several thousand kinds of stream entrant. But here they hardly distinguish one. Well they don't distinguish one, not in this Sutta. It does seem that originally there was just a full ideal presented; that the bhikkhu, the Arahant, the Muni, all these all meant more or less the same thing, even the Buddha. And later on when people, or the Buddha seemed to attract perhaps a few less gifted people, they distinguished the stream entrant and one who was an Arahant. And then after that he started

attracting really spiritually backward people. It was not only stream-entrant and once-returner, and non-returner and Arahant; there was all these categories. And centuries later there were apparently many, many different kinds of worldling. There was the (?) as an intermediate stage. There were intermediate stages between intermediate stages and they were all sub-divided and so on. (11) But at this stage no, there's nothing. Bhikkhu equals Arahant equals Muni equals Buddha. It's just the ideal.

___: Do you think in fact the Buddha did only attract highly gifted people (?) administrative classification (?).

S: I must also say that as regards the Buddha's first five disciples they weren't all that easy to convince. It took several months of hard work on the Buddha's part. So it does seem as though even in the case of the Buddha's own teaching career, there was a momentum that perhaps as it were, he gradually worked up to. It seems as though he didn't at the very beginning produce those instantaneous effects in all cases by any means. But later on, he very often did, and after that there was a gradual falling off due to no fault of His. But more and more people flocked in, for perhaps quite different reasons or somewhat different reasons. Less spiritually gifted people, and they could only gain, you know, take away so much.

___: (?)

S: Attention. But I mean also it could be and this is another point of view entirely, a more traditional point of view, that the Buddha came into the world from previous lives, not just on his own, but with an entourage of people who had also been with him in previous lives. I mean this is traced in some cases, through the Jataka stories. So it wasn't just the Buddha it was a whole movement around the Buddha, coming from previous lives and previous worlds. So if you had the Buddha you had all of them and they'd been with him in previous lives, they'd been with him before. So they were all just carrying on as it were the same work. So it was only natural that they should have benefited very, very greatly from the Buddha's teaching and almost instantaneously.

___: (?)

S: Yes. But on a much bigger scale, you could say. Yes. A much grander scale. One doesn't want to press this too much because it is something you either accept or you don't. You can't really argue about it. It either means something to you or it doesn't. For want of a better term, it's more or less a matter of faith. But this is one of the ways in which it has been looked at in the past.

___: Isn't it rather like the historical and evolutionary conditions being so that they can receive maybe what the Buddha has to say? Isn't it that idea?

S: No, it's more the idea that even in order to be born at the same time as the Buddha, to be in contact with Him, there must have been tremendous good karma, you know, tremendous 'punya' as it were, to their account, some of it due to their association with Him in earlier life.

Sagaramati: I think you said on another seminar that coming into contact with a spiritual teacher (or the Buddha) was not dependent on your karma.

S: No, no.

Sagaramati: That a good karma doesn't affect (?)

[12]

S: That's true, it can't be the decisive factor, no, it can't be the decisive factor. In a way there's no decisive factor, you know, on that sort of level in a karmic sense.

___: Not even on say, the distinction between tainted (?) and pure (?).

S: I'd say not even on the basis of that distinction. Even pure merits are incommensurate with the transcendental. Anyway that is carrying us away into the Mahayana isn't it! Right, lets go through, lets start going through the Sutta verse by verse. There are quite a few points that emerge. Let's go through the first verse: 'Who checks the spread of risen wrath as salves the venom of a snake. That monk quits bounds both here and yon, as snake his old and worn out skin.' The grammatical construction of the English is a bit obscure here. 'Who so checks the spread of wrath', that has actually arisen in the same that as a salve or medicine checks the venom of a snake. 'That monk quits bounds both here and yon. The snake his old and worn out skin.' So this raises a quite important point, which is the importance of checking, or restraining. The (wrath) that has actually arisen. This is considered sufficiently important to remain almost a condition of the spiritual life, that this is one of the things that you do. This is one of the things that you slough off - the habit of giving way to wrath. So it suggests, that is wrath, what's the word here? `Kodha', 'anger', 'fury' may arise in the mind in a sense this is sort of natural. Sometimes situations do occur or you have experiences that make you angry, even furious. In a sense you can't help that. What you can help is that you don't give way to it. You don't allow it to rage unrestrained. The feeling, the anger, the fury arises in your mind, but you check it. Now this does go against quite a lot of current, as it were, thought, that you should 'let it rip' and 'let it all hang out.' So it's very important to understand what is meant exactly by this checking. This checking is not, as it were, pretending you don't feel angry. It's not, as it were, alienating yourself from the feeling of being angry. It's saying to yourself, 'well yes I am very angry' rightly or wrongly. This is what I feel, this is what I experience. But it will not be skilful to give outward expression to this - that is what I must watch. It's suppression, rather than repression, it is not an unconscious process it's a fully conscious process. You know exactly what you are doing. This rage, this anger, this fury, has arisen within you just like a horse that is rearing, as it were, but you restrain it, you don't let it have its own way. And if possible you do something with the energy of that anger, that fury. You lead it or guide it in a certain direction; you don't just stamp on it. You don't just crush it. So this is the sort of thing that is being got at here, you check the arisen anger. You don't repress, you don't pretend it isn't there.

___: (I think) there's no situation in which anger is expressed that has arisen as it were.

S: Well this raises the further question of what do you mean by expression?

___: Action.

S: Even what do you mean by action. (pause) You may feel like murdering somebody. Take the extreme case, you may feel like murdering somebody but you may feel also that the emotion is so violent and so strong that if you don't give it some outlet that's not going to be

[13] really good. So at least maybe you allow yourself to speak some very harsh words - that's better than committing a murder. But this is sort of very extreme because for you to get into that murderous state of mind probably means you haven't done very much about your spiritual training in general up to that point. But sometimes you may actually give expression. But what you are checking is the totally unrestrained bursting forth of that regardless of consequences to self and other's. It's that that you must check. But you may allow in a sense mindfully a little bit of that anger to escape in a form of words, even an action, just to give yourself a safety valve to some extent if you feel that is really necessary, though in the light of the overall situation or for the sake of the overall situation which I'd be very careful about that.

___: You'd have to assess what the overall situation ...

S: Yes, you'd have to assess very quickly if you're in that sort of state of mind. But strange to say, very often you can if you're very, very angry, you sometimes experience a great clarity of mind, yes, because all the energy is there!

___: Sometimes if you're angry and you don't express it (?) in some sort of action, I mean you are expressing it, because there is a cloud kind of something around you.

S: Yes, the sullen resentment.

___: Yes, if you're trying to hold it in and you're angry (?) you give off an atmosphere.

___: Yes, the other reads it.

___: (?) pick it up and they often feel worse about that because they don't know what's going on,

S: Well instead of there being just a sort of single flash of lightening a whole sky becomes black, (laughter) and overcast. It's rather like that, yes?

Voices: Yes.

___: (?) having to respond to something that isn't there, you know, (?) pretending you're not angry, when you are (?).

S: But also of course, expression of anger can simply take the form of acknowledgement. We can say, well look here I'm feeling very angry. That at once restores the directness and honesty of the communication. And it relieves the tension, but you're not sort of bursting forth in an unskilful way. But also you have to take into account the fact that you should not have allowed yourself to get into that particular state to begin with. Or to have placed yourself in a situation or series of situations that would have that end result, as far as you can foresee anyway.

Sagaramati: (?) somebody just seems to be sort of just blocking you in a way, I mean in communication.

S: Well if someone is deliberately blocking you and sometimes people do this, then I would

say for most people there are only two things that you can do. You can break off the communication, which is not of course [14] a real communication, only an attempt at communication on your part, and just go away. Or, you just become angry. These are really only you know, the two alternatives within the bounds of ordinary human capacity. Sometimes of course the person who is blocking your communication wants you to be angry, wants you to be angry. So if you can see this then you have to decide well, would it be skilful even so, to become angry in the way they would like or not?

___: They may be blocking you because they're angry.

S: They may be blocking you because they're angry, but in such cases I think, I mean this is, you know, as far as my own experience goes, the anger is much more general, and goes very, very far back in their life experience. And is a sort of deep-rooted resentment against almost everything and everybody. Therefore they just block, they're so angry, they just go on blocking all the time. And anyway it isn't easy to deal with that sort of situation or that sort of person. Even a momentary outburst on your part won't do very much good. Perhaps your mistake lay in trying to communicate in that sort of way with that sort of person. Perhaps you ought to have understood that that is what they were in fact like. And not have taken on that responsibility of trying to communicate. You can't always help it, you may have just been landed with them on a retreat in a communication exercise - I mean what can you do then?

___: Or living with them in a squat.

S: That would be a very hot squat, wouldn't it! (laughter)

___: (?) except sometimes (?) situations you put yourself in. Sometimes come up in meditation, you know, willy-nilly.

S: Yes. What you mean the feeling of anger?

___: Yes.

S: Well inasmuch as no other person is involved then that's a comparatively simple situation.

___: Well it's not when you come (?? out of a meditation situation whoever crosses your path?)

S: Well just say, well look I'm sorry I'm feeling angry, you know just say that it came up in meditation, don't take it personally, that is just how I'm feeling. That'll surely help you. You ought to be able to go back to your own community and at least say that to the people (? who are). You know or you can even have a sort of recognized sign or symbol like Herbert Spencer. (laughter) He had an 'angry suit', it was a sort of rough woollen combination (laughter) and when he came down to breakfast in it in the morning, every member of the household knew he was really angry, and were very, very careful that was his angry suit, Herbert Spencer. So you could have a little sort of signal that every body knows.

___: What are the other people supposed to do sit around?

S: Steer clear. Just keep away. Unless they're prepared to take the risk of trying to

communicate [15] (with the risk?) snapping their head off.

Padmaraja: Sometimes one feels a little bit intimidated almost obliged to go in and challenge.

S: No, that's because you don't like being beaten. You like to think your such a friendly person, you can be friendly with them and make them friendly. You don't want to allow them to be angry. I remember when I was staying at fifty-five, I always knew when Siddhiratna was angry, yes, because he just sort of slightly shut himself off. Then you'd know he's not in a very, well I won't say not in a very good mood, sometimes it was quite good, but it was a bit angry. So we just (?) not talked to him very much for an hour or two and after that he'd be all right. So you knew the signal, he just wouldn't be very communicative. So if you're a bit sensitive to the way people behave and respect that then there's no real difficulty. You shouldn't try to force them to be friendly, (and it amounts to forcing) when they don't want to be friendly. Let them be unfriendly, if they want to be unfriendly, if that's how they feel. Respect their feeling. Not to feel personally hurt or upset, or inadequate because you can't quite spread loving kindness all around and melt everybody with that. Sometimes people have to be allowed to be 'negative' in inverted commas. We shouldn't take it too much to heart that they're like that or, you know, consider we failed. They have the right to be the way that they want to be.

___: I often find it quite difficult to distinguish at least at the beginning, between anger in that negative sense and just something which is quite a high charge of energy which may motivate me to do things. I mean I think, I have to distinguish between anger in the sense of resentment and shutting myself off to people, and just a high level of energy with which I can do things. But if I don't find the right things to do or the right way of expressing it, well then it turns to shutting myself off, but I don't think it is originally. This could easily be called anger but I'm not sure whether it is. It just seems to be kind of 'go', you know, something like that.

___: (Inaudible)

___: Yes, you know ready to act and if I find the action well that's fine, it's just high energy.

S: I think the difference is at least to some extent, that that high energy is not directed towards any particular individual. But anger is. So when you have that, that sort of charge of energy as you say, you're not thinking of any particular person you just want to express that energy. But, when you become angry or in a bad mood, it's almost always, I think, in connection with some particular person or you feel like discharging it on to some particular person.

___: Is that what you mean by the right to be angry?

S: Yes, yes.

___: I wasn't sure what you meant by that [16] there isn't a right to be angry.

S: Not so much that you have a right to be angry or that you should think that you have a right to be angry, but other people should think that you have a right to be angry. That they don't have the right to try to virtually impose their feelings on you, on the plea that their feelings are positive and yours are negative.

___: (? You said (?) have the right to?)

S: But they do.

___: Which they do.

S: They do, but you have the right ...

___: ... it's not the right to be angry just the way it is, being as you are.

S: But you have the right if you feel that they are not being as positive as they might to try to change that and to change them. But you must do it in a skilful, and as it were, respectful way, not as it were, hitting them over the head with your so-called positivity.

___: Drawing out their potential.

S: Drawing out their potential, yes, but not feeling as it were, either hurt or inadequate. Because they are not being the way you would like them to be. Sometimes it's just your own insecurity that makes you insist on that. You can't bear the fact that they may not be positive or aren't being towards you, and that they're being negative and unpleasant. But sometimes you have to allow that. And I mean I use the word that they have the right to be just, as it were, to indicate that their individuality or they as individuals must be respected. Even in the midst of the vicissitudes of the so-called negative. Otherwise our so-called concern for other people and our effort to make them positive or a wish that they should be positive just becomes a sort of moral bullying. We put ourselves in the right and label our attitude as positive and theirs negative, which it may well be but, underneath it all (?) are just imposing ourself on them, which isn't right.

Padmaraja: Going back to the example of Herbert Spencer, coming down in his hair suit every morning ...

S: Not every morning! only when he got angry! (laughter)

Padmaraja: You imagine his family creeping around. I mean just imagine that going on every day. Its like a tyranny isn't it, imposing ...

S: In a way it was. Don't forget this was the Victorian period and he was the head of the household as it were. And in those days heads of households did that kind of thing I'm afraid. He wasn't married by the way.

Padmaraja: What should they do in such a situation, just get out of it?

S: Well I think it depends on the kind of relationship, overall relationship, you have with that particular person. If it's an attitude of say reserve and distance there's not very much you can say, you [17] just keep clear. But if that isn't the case, and if you know that person quite well, then you respect their little signal for the time being. But, when a suitable opportunity presents itself you just raise the matter and discuss it. (So you) say 'what went wrong?' 'What was the matter this morning?' But not just observe the signal and then when you become angry and put up your signal (they) observe your signal, but you never actually talk about it

that doesn't sound very good. If it's something quite trivial and it doesn't happen very often well, why bother even to talk about it, if the overall relationship is a good healthy positive one. No need to discuss every little bit of negativity and analyse it to death, as it were. Well you don't analyse to death you keep it more and more alive (in that way)

___: (?)

Padmaraja: I don't want to digress too far but some people tend to use this kind of thing to impose a tyranny on other people.

S: Yes.

Padmaraja: They kind of exploit the other person, through their anger.

S: Yes, but why do other people allow them to do that?

Padmaraja: Yes, that's what I'd like to know.

S: I think very often it is out of fear. I think a lot of people are afraid of the anger and do not avoid out of skilfulness or respect of the other person's individuality, they are just afraid.

Padmaraja: Kind of creep around,

S: And creep around, lest there should be you know, an explosion.

Padmaraja: So such a person, it may be quite skilful then for such a person to face that.

S: Yes, because they'd be facing not only that other person's anger but their own fear.

___: Bhante, does this first line mean that in fact Arahants feel wrath?

S: No it doesn't. The Arahant doesn't feel wrath.

___: So he wouldn't have to check the spread of risen ...

S: The Arahant wouldn't no, no.

___: That's why I asked you about stream-entrant in the first place.

S: But here I would say throughout this Sutta it's undifferentiated. You might speak perhaps of a slight progression as it were, as the Sutta goes on. But I'd prefer not to take even that very seriously. One could even say that one need not take very seriously even this question of checking the risen wrath. In a sense that is that one could take it as meaning that even in a situation where normally people [18] become angry and expressed it, that the bhikkhu, the Arahant, just doesn't. So other people will probably think well, he's just checked his wrath. Be rather difficult for them to imagine him not even actually feeling anger - you can look at it in that way. To the outsider well, it's a difficult situation. He's received extreme provocation but he doesn't react. Well he must have checked his wrath, and that's how someone should behave. We mustn't take these expressions too literally or even scholastically.

___: You said he doesn't actually feel it.

S: In the case of the Arahant no. If one wants to go into the technical position, if one defines someone as an Arahant, or if one is speaking of what the slightly later Buddhist tradition calls the Arahant, then by definition he doesn't even actually feel these things. But here it is, as it were, undifferentiated. They haven't got around to discussing things in that sort of technical way. He checks his anger, he doesn't get angry. They've hardly distinguished between those two things at this stage. He's just sloughed it off. One could even go so far as to say that in the case of this sort of energy that you've spoken of, sometimes it's hardly distinguishable from anger in the more ordinary sense. It's very difficult to decide. So in the case of some comparatively evolved spiritual person, sometimes it's very difficult to say whether he's restraining his anger or holding his energy in check. How do you know? It looks more or less the same externally. But you don't really know what is happening within his mind or within his heart. But all that you do know is that he doesn't burst forth and hit somebody or lose his temper in some other way. So there's energy which is held in check but, in a healthy sort of way just like you restrain a rather high spirited meddlesome horse. The horse is quite all right but you don't let him have his head, you've got your hand on the reins. But even that isn't very adequate because that suggests a sort of force, a certain pulling back. But even that isn't present really in the case of the more highly developed person, and his energy or even in a sense, his anger. It's not even pulled back. I mean the energy is there and it's available, it doesn't move until it's given the word. It's completely as it were, obedient. It's very difficult for us to imagine that sort of state of mind or state of being because we are so riddled, not to say ridden, with conflict. And, for us it's quite difficult to imagine having a very powerful sort of emotion, usually labelled unskilful, at least in certain forms and just having it there, and we don't have to check it. But it's just available and it isn't actually going out. But that in a sense is how it is.

___: But checking is still conflict.

S: Yes, yes. But you know we have to use some sort of word. We don't have a word. But let us try to imagine a situation in which the energy has arisen, it is not allowed outward expression, it is available but it is not being checked in a sense that suggests conflict.

___: Harnessed?

S: Harnessed is better, yes. Though even that isn't perfect because why do you need harness? Perhaps an analogy from music would be better. When you're playing you're full of inspiration, you're carried away by the music. You're playing that Brahms concerto, banging away on the piano you are playing, but not a bit of your energy goes outside. You're using [19] it in a highly skilled manner; not a bit of your energy spills. It's completely, for want of a better word, controlled. But there's no conflict, the energy and what you're doing with the energy, these two things are completely integrated. There's no check, it's very difficult, I mean in any situation, whether a musical one or an ordinary life one. But if we can be in that sort of state all our energy is there as it were. The potentiality of anger is there but we don't become angry. Well then that's a very positive situation and then we have lots of energy and we're very alive. Otherwise, you know, this ordinary conception of spiritual life is that you bash your passions over the head. You sort of knock them half unconscious; you knock yourself half unconscious in the process too. Then you can't do very much. You follow the middle path. So just check, check the risen wrath, but even 'check' in inverted commas, don't crush

down your energy. Let your energy be there, fully ready and available. But how you use it is entirely within your own power.

Sagaramati: (?) a vigorous expression.

S: A vigorous expression, yes. You're able to indulge in a vigorous expression if you feel that that is a skilful thing to do. And there's no sort of stopping and thinking even, there's no hiatus. It's smooth and sort of more like a flow and even if it doesn't happen, if there's no expression it's still quite smooth and like a flow, there's no violent check.

Voice: But that vigorous expression would be free from any kind of hatred or desire to harm.

S: Yes it wouldn't be reactive.

Sagaramati: I think you can tell, I mean you do feel (?) sort of clear; no sort of blackness about (it).

S: Right, you feel within you. Well look, I'm speaking very strongly I'm really telling that person off, I'm really telling them where it's at. I'm not mincing my words. But my intentions are completely skilful and positive. How do you feel that within yourself? If you want to hurt somebody and you speak harshly in order to hurt them you know that too is very, very different.

___: Also when I feel (? that there's) just high levels of energy, within seconds that can turn into hatred if I haven't found the right way of using it or expressing it, or doing something with it. And it can get worse once it has turned into that. One has to be quite careful to kind of ...

S: Well that's the little point of intersection between the circle and spiral. You either go round again on the circle or you just get up on to the spiral. But just for a seconds, (as you say?) it can be either. (Well lets go on to ah, no ...) 'That monk quits bounds both here and yon,'. 'Here and yon' is generally understood to refer to this life and the future life. It suggests, especially in terms of the later tradition, complete emancipation from this life and from any future life. In other words, those forces or those energies, those conditioned energies, that make for a renewed future existence, have been completely transcended. What about the next verse, we talked about this a little bit earlier on? 'Who passion wholly cutteth off as gatherer lake grown lotus blooms. That monk quits bounds both here and yon, as snake his old and worn out skin.'

[20]

So in the first verse your sloughing off croda or coda, wrath, anger. In the second its raga, or passion or lust, in the more general sense, and there's the comparison in each case. In the case of the wrath, the anger, you're checking that, just as a salve, a healing ointment, drives out the poison of the snake-bite. And here you're cutting it off, just as the gatherer gathers lotus blooms, which are growing in the lake. So it's the same thing sort of overall attitude, the same sort of overall approach - a healthy one. Just as you didn't crush the anger, you just checked it. In the same way you don't trample the lotus blooms of the passion, you just pluck them. It's not reactive its skilful. You can see that they need to be plucked. But you don't do it in a sort of reactive way, you do it in a skilful way.

Padmaraja: Could one say that first they need to blossom before one plucks them?

S: Oh, I think that would be quite dangerous! (laughter) They're in blossom all the time! (laughter) They are never in bud, as soon as you enter this life they are in full bloom.

___: Do lotuses grow anywhere apart from lakes

S: No it is a water plant the lotus.

___: Do they grow in fast flowing water?

S: No it's usually standing water.

___: In Kew Gardens they've got lotuses growing (?) and they say they are the sacred lotuses of the Buddhist religion.

S: Are they actually lotuses, not lilies?

___: No they are lotuses.

S: Really. Well, in India I've only seen them growing in (water). They do of course they are rooted in the mud at the bottom of the pond. But that is how they grow. The leaves of course, you know, some of them rest on the water; the others rise above.

___: Well that's just a bit of horticultural jiggery-pokery really.

S: Yes well you can grow almost anything either just in water or just in earth, even on the air or in the air.

___: Bhante, does the word, Pali word, for passion have the same nuance as this word, you know, suffering?

S: Oh no, not at all, no, no.

___: How is that related anyway - the two meanings of passion?

S: Well, the Latin 'passio' is to suffer, hence we speak of the passion of Christ. Not Christ flying into a passion or feeling [21] craving or lust ...

___: (?) the Latin 'passio' means (?)

S: Well because when you're experiencing passion you are passive. You are merely reactive and to be merely reactive is to be passive. You are only active when you are creative. When you experience craving something is happening to you. You are automatically responding as a pure animal, as it were, to a stimulus. You're not doing anything; something is being done to you.

___: So the connection is through being passive?

S: Yes. For instance someone shows you a beautiful steak and your mouth starts watering, you start feeling greedy, well that's passion. You're quite passive in this; its an automatic response, so much of our so-called feeling and passion and craving and enjoyment is just of this nature, we're passive. It's done to us. This is one of the quite interesting points in Gurdjieff's teaching. He always emphasized, and this is very much in agreement with Buddhist teaching which is probably where he got it from, but he brings it out very forcibly and clearly, that we not do things, things happen to us. We just respond automatically, reactively, we don't initiate anything, we don't really do anything. We don't act we react, much of the time. We're passive so we suffer. It's a question of passion. When you see that box of chocolates, beside you and your hand stretches out towards it. The fact that your hand is moving or that you are moving your hand, doesn't mean that your being active, you are being completely passive. If anything it's the box of chocolates that is active. (pause) So there's the connection, but that sort of connection is not found on this Pali word 'raga', no. There's not that sort of linguistic tie-up between 'raga' and 'dukkha' at all no.

___: That's why I asked because passion is rather connected with suffering. It's the same sort of experience.

S: Well in the long run no doubt. But perhaps in the short run it's rather a different matter, for some people at least.

___: Well it's like the other side of the coin.

S: Yes. Well again, in the long run. Actually it is, at that very same moment, the other side of the coin, if you can only see it. But usually it takes time to turn the coin round. You only see it later on; you don't turn it round very willingly. That's something that happens in another sense. Willy-nilly, you have to face the other side of the coin. (pause) So raga is passion more in the sense of very powerful craving. So you cut that off, just as the gatherer of the lotus blooms plucks the lotus, snaps the stem. Only he's holding it in his hands then it isn't rooted any more and though it is apparently fresh and blooming, sooner or later it will die. Of course it would've died sooner or later anyway, but that's pressing the comparison rather too literally because its source of nourishment is removed.

___: I can't see how what creativity is, if passion is being passive and things act on you?

[22]

S: Well creativity is acting from the depths of your own being, without there being even any objective occasion for that. For instance, take the case of painting a picture. There could be a situation in which someone asks you to paint a picture. Okay, you paint for them because you've been asked. You could say that that is more or less reactive. In the course of actually painting it may turn into something else but that's a different matter. But supposing nobody asks you to paint a picture, the urge to paint comes entirely from within. You've not seen even what you want to reproduce, it just comes from within, then that is creative. You've initiated it from within - of course the deeper the level the more truly creative. It may be a sort of inner need which is still reactive so your creativity is still not pure creativity. But the deeper you go to a level even below that of need, or if you've come to a visionary level, then the more purely creative you are. The less dependant upon external stimulus and so on a purer expression of yourself. (Pause) You feel that more with some kinds of art or some kinds of literature than others. Recently I've been reading Shelley again, you feel it very strongly with him. He just

sort of (sings) (?) gushes forth.

___: This passion is a passive stage, could one say anger was an active stage?

S: You could, but I think it would probably be really more true to say that even anger is passive; not using the term anger in the sense of that energy you spoke of.

___: That's what I meant in the sense of that energy, that that is an active state.

S: Oh, I must say yes, taking it as energy yes that is active yes. That is not passive. It isn't excited by any actual (?) it just arises within you.

___: Yes, that is what I meant.

S: (?) out of the abundance of your own life, as it were, your own vigour. You go looking around, as it were, for some channel through which to express it, whereas in the case of hatred, well it's excited by some external cause.

___: (?) difference between hatred and resentment (? apart from?)

S: I would say, I mean this is, I don't know how correct this is psychologically, but my own usage is this, that resentment I think of as a rather sullen sort of anger, that has continued for a long time without finding external expression (pause) - but that's how I think of resentment.

___: Yes, I think also that it's like almost a secondary emotion anger is much more a primary one, whereas resentment may have been conditioned throughout your life. A lot of conditioned responses but anger is just something very primeval.

___: Well I was just wondering whether in fact we might find that all these have two sides - passive and active, you know, as a (?) rather (?) not [23] very forceful conscious side, (?) side.

S: Well this is more the, we're going beyond this text, this is more the, as it were, Tantric point of view. That they speak even of the 'Buddha anger' you know. What you speak of your speaking about anger in a more positive sense; speak of a Buddha anger, even.

___: (?) quite different from the wrath that the Arahant (does)...

S: Oh yes indeed, yes. Even the Arahant can speak in what seems to be a harsh manner, which isn't really inwardly harsh, there's no sort of violent intention behind it, but he may speak in very, very severe and hard language. You know, for a certain skilful purpose. And the Buddha can utter His lion's roar, which certainly isn't anything meek or mild or gentle even. It is very much a question of this fine point where the circle and spiral intersect. [24] It's as though just for an instant you've got the potentiality of going in either direction: either that sheer energy or anger in a more negative sense, or even hatred, and in the long run resentment. But (it's) more important to get rid of the hatred as it were but keep the anger, keep the energy, or even you can say get rid of the anger but keep the energy. But very often it you suppress your anger in the ordinary sense of the term, you lose the energy which is a pity. Sometimes you have to keep yourself keyed up almost in a state of anger. It can be quite

positive in a way just as 'anger'.

___: (Inaudible)

S: It's as though you have the energy always on tap. If you are not very careful it can of course go in the direction of 'real anger' - otherwise it's not real anger, but that is the sort of risk you have to take. But what is really bad is to be blocked and lifeless and sometimes, though it's not the sort of thing that one says very readily (it's certainly not said in the Buddhist tradition), sometimes to unblock yourself you might have to get really angry (which) is an unskilful negative thing. You have to be very careful of any self-indulgence but in the long run it could be positive. And sometimes what we call 'good people' are simply people who sat on this allegedly more negative side of themselves; never sat on and block their own energy. They are just 'good' people in the Blakean sense. They are merely angels. As you've to got to unite that demonical energy with the angelicality; the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove. Anyway, let's go on. The next verse.

'Who craving wholly cutteth off
And dries its swiftly flowing stream,
That monk quits bounds both here and yon
As snake his old and worn-out skin.'

Craving - see what the word is. 'Tanha', 'trsna' (Skt): thirst, literally thirst. Who cuts off the stream of craving, just as the snake sloughs off his old and worn out skin. 'That monk quits bounds both here and yon.' A change of metaphor, thirst, craving, it's like a stream, it has to be dried up. In a way a slightly different approach, you don't sort of re-direct the water, it's dried up completely.

___: Not dammed.

S: Not 'dammed', no. It's evaporated you could say. It's transformed into a higher element, it's become steam, it's become air. It becomes much more refined, more tenuous. You don't destroy or annihilate it. Or if you dry up, you dry it up with heat. If you apply heat to water what happens it becomes steam. There is an alchemical process. I don't know that all this is implicit in the actual words of the text. It's certainly implicit in this sort of spiritual situation. You apply heat to water and produce steam. That steam of course can drive mighty engines.

Jinamata: I think an element of transformation and sort of non-violence is present also in the cutting. You don't (?) a (?). You don't sort of violently cut it.

S: You don't tear up, you don't uproot.

Jinamata: We've got something like that to learn, not to be violent.

[25]

S: Yes, even with yourself. I sometimes quote that gorgeous example of Christmas Humphreys' rhetoric at a Summer School when he was giving [a] quite excellent talk on the spiritual life as climbing up a mountain like and making and making (us) lighter and lighter so that you could climb higher and higher, and he spoke of that spiritual mountaineer in the course of his ascent as 'hacking off great bleeding lumps of self'. That is not the language of

the Pali scriptures; certainly not the language of the Buddhist scriptures. He plucks the lotus; he dries up the stream. In that particular rhetoric there is a very violent approach (inherent?), you're doing violence to yourself. Well in a metaphysical sense perhaps you should but not in that sort of way. That really is the extreme of self-torture, of repression, this hacking away... And there is quite a bit of that in the Christian tradition unfortunately, this doing violence to oneself, of not even respecting one's weakness, even one's wickedness. One could say even one's wickednesses are to be respected, not treated in that sort of way.

Jinamata: I think that's fair enough (Inaudible)

S: It's a very brutal approach to oneself. And if you are brutal towards yourself, you can easily be brutal towards others too. Be firm, even be severe, be hard but not that sort of brutality and violence. That expresses a real conflict - just dry up the stream.

Jinamata: I wonder about the monks in Vietnam who burn themselves and the fact that is (a violence).

S: That's quite a good question. I thought quite a lot about this in those early days when monks were burning themselves ...

Jinamata: (Inaudible)

S: I remember the case of the monk who started it all off, and I thought about this. I saw that famous picture. You may remember. But what was remarkable was that he was seated as though in meditation. He left a letter behind saying 'I am not doing this out of any ill will towards anybody, I wish well towards all even towards the Christians who were persecuting Buddhism'. And by all accounts he seated himself in meditation - having poured kerosene over his robe - and he passed away peacefully and quietly. If one can do that, that is not violence, that's the great criterion, how you yourself feel. But I think there were some others afterwards who as it were imitated him who were not in that sort of state of spiritual development, as he was, who did in fact do violence to themselves. I think it's the same thing to a great extent with those who burn themselves. I think this is violence towards oneself. It's a sort of punishment in many cases at least and I am not at happy about it even there may be some canonical sections of that in a way. It's certainly fairly traditional in Chinese Buddhism.

Jinamata: Where does that tradition come from?

S: From the White Lotus Sutra where there is the example of the monk who, ages and ages ago, who fed himself on perfumed oil and then set fire to himself to make a beautiful perfumed offering lamp to offer to the Buddha. Now I wonder how literally we can take that. It's quite a serious matter because the Nichiren monks take that sutra quite literally but whether it is to be taken literally I don't know. [26] We are told that the monk after setting fire to himself burnt for many, many kalpas. So is it to be taken literally? What is that burning? What does burning mean itself, what does the symbol of fire mean? Is it the inner fire, is it 'tapashya'? 'Tapashya' means burning. But is it the inner psychic burning, the burning up of all impurities, the alchemical burning. Perhaps it's really that that has been suggested.

Jinamata: (?)

S: One can say that if there is any question of self-punishment, any sort of doing an act of violence to oneself, that is not in accordance with the spirit of Buddhism really.

___: Could you not say any more from the political point of view that those monks decided it would be possibly for the good of the Buddhist movement if they advertised themselves in this way...

S: I think some of them may have felt that but it depends also on their attitude towards those against whom they were protesting. If they felt anger their anger had no outlet because they were weak, though they were in the majority numerically but the Christian government had the army, the weapons and the power. If they felt angry and frustrated and resentful, and then turned that against themselves to make things difficult for the other people that would not be very skilful. But the old monk who set fire to himself seemed genuinely to want to help everybody. He was not doing it against anybody. He (just) wanted to draw attention but it looked as though that sort of level did not last very long, and there were about a dozen who burnt themselves and some clearly did not have that sort of attitude. What they did in a way from a human point of view may be very heroic but not really completely Buddhist or even very Buddhist in some instances. In the West we have to watch this very much, this sort of self-punishment, self-burning, self-torture. We really have to watch that.

Jinamata: Even though there is less violence now (there is) mental violence...

S: Self-reproach is punishment, guilt. It's tidied up with all those things. And very often if you harm yourself in a situation such as that in which those monks found themselves, you harm yourself when you commit suicide sometimes, it's anger which you can't unleash on someone you feel the anger towards, so you release it on yourself.

Dhammadinna: (?) May be it's towards yourself that you feel the anger.

S: Well, that is another possibility, a different one. But you should not feel angry in that sort of way even towards yourself. (Pause) So all this discussion seems to suggest or seems to indicate an attitude which is certainly firm, which is decisive, which is even severe, which is even hard but not brutal, not repressive, not violent. Whether dealing with oneself or dealing with other people, which is clean and direct, which violence certainly is not, bullying certainly is not. This is what one feels very much reading some of these ancient texts like the Sutta Nipata. There is tremendous zeal, tremendous heroism, tremendous austerity in a way but there is nothing unskilful, nothing unhealthy, nothing neurotic. This is what one feels so much. It's very much like the ancient Greeks in that respect. There is no self-punishment. I hope I am not idealizing or over-idealising the ancient Greeks but I feel very much that sort of atmosphere. (When I even interpret it?). All right let's go on.

[27]

'Who pride doth wholly sweep away
As flood a fragile bridge of reeds'

Another comparison. Now you've got pride. What's that in Pali? 'Mana'. In the latest scholastic analysis, that's the last factor to be broken by the Arahant, pride, conceit. 'I am I' in that sort of sense. So the bhikkhu, he sweeps away pride just like a flood sweeping away a fragile bridge of reeds. It's as though the situation is completely reverse. The energy and the

power are all on the side of the positive. Your conceit is really so weak, so ridiculous, like a bridge of reeds. It can't really bear anything, it's got no strength. And when your spiritual energy is really aroused it sweeps away that ridiculous conceit, that ridiculous sort of over-estimation of oneself. We need not look at it very metaphysically. At this level or this stage there is no metaphysics in that more academic sense, in the more speculative sense.

Marichi: (Inaudible)

S: No, I don't think ... it is a rather (voices interrupting but inaudible) 'Who' ... 'That monk who sweeps away his pride just as the flood sweeps away the fragile bridge of reeds'. There is an awkward inversion here because of the exigences of translation. Let's see what the other translation says.

'Who sweeps away conceit
As flood a bridge of reeds'

Voices: (Unclear mumble.)

S: No, that's why I said the situation is reversed ... the power, the energy like that of a great flood is all on the side of the positive. It's your own conceit which is so weak in comparison which is swept away. You can appreciate here how the energy is as it were really all on the spiritual side. (Pause.) Right, let's go on then.

'Who in becomings finds no pith
As seeker in fig-trees no flowers'

___: What is 'pith'?

S: 'Pith' is ... the Pali word is 'saram' at least in other texts let's have a look here. (voices mumble ...) 'saram', yes, it's the inside of a reed, it's got a sort of white pith. It's the heart, the core, the essence.

___: Like marrow of a bone?

S: It's like the marrow also, yes. So 'Who in becomings finds no pith'. 'Becomings' should be 'bhave'. 'Bhavesu' is plural - locative plural - in 'becomings'. Now this 'becoming' is obviously a very technical Pali expression in a way; instead of 'being': 'becoming', process. Who, what in fact are processes, bare processes, pure processes, finds no unchanging, substantial essence or pith, or marrow or core or heart, whatever you may like to call it. 'Who does not find in any conditioned thing the characteristics of the unconditioned' in later language one can say. But you find this whole of conditioned existence, all these becomings, all these processes that are going on, without any self-essence. You experience them as what the later tradition called [28] 'Sunyata' Voidness. It does not mean empty as opposed to full, but you see everything in terms of pure process, pure change. Nothing unchanging, nothing that you can sort of get hold of, nothing that remains the same all the time, nothing that gives you any security. The metaphysically substantial is the counterpart of your psychological craving for security. (It's) why you want to find a pith and an essence, so you can be sure you are clinging on to it. If you don't feel that sort of need, if you don't feel that sort of insecurity, you find everything free, and flowing, and open.

___: And that's the unconditioned?

S: Hum, yes, yes, ... in terms of the later terminology, it is not used here. But you find this word 'sara' - the pith or the essence - in the Dhammapada too. There is a verse in which it says 'he who does not see the essence in the essenceless, or the essenceless in the essence, he truly sees'. There is a verse like that. The true essence is Nirvana, that which does not possess real essence - though we think it does - is samsara, the conditioned. So this word, this very non-metaphysical word, this very concrete-word 'sara' - pith or essence - is quite prominent in the early Pali texts. It's as though those texts use very popular language. There is not even any talk of 'anatta' at this stage as it were, at least not so far as this text is concerned. (It says) that which has pith and that which does not have pith, that which has marrow or does not have marrow. You talk of the 'sara' of a tree, that is the solid wood as distinct from the bark is called 'sara', the sound timber of the tree.

: Is this 'becoming' phenomena as well as processes or are they the same?

S: They are the same. It's processes, phenomena - both personal and non-personal. It's a very general word; it's very much like our English word 'thing' except that it's dynamic and not static. It's like thinging, things as processes.

: Is there a parable depicting this?

S: Yes, there is where the Buddha speaks of a man goes about in quest of sound timber, of solid timber, pith, 'sara'; not just the outer husk, not just the bark. He wants the actual timber.

: It's a much simpler way of talking about things actually.

S: It's more concrete. It means to see things as devoid of pith, means there is not really anything in them. Ultimately there is nothing in them, it's as sort of as simple as that. You can express it much more metaphysically but that is not done at this particular stage of the teaching. You don't find any pith in (anything); you don't find any essence, any heart in things. There is nothing absolute in things. You sit very loose to them all. Your heart is elsewhere as it were. You don't find any solidity in things. You don't mind that because you are not looking for solidity in those sorts of things. You are quite ready to accept their lack of solidity, their bubble-like quality.

___ 'Who in becomings finds no pith, as seeker in fig-trees no flowers.' Why should the seeker in fig-trees not find any flowers?

: They don't have flowers.

S: They don't have flowers, they've got some other (quality), I don't know what it is (laughter). May be someone can enlighten me!

[29]

It's a very traditional not to say hackneyed comparison not to look the flowers of the fig-tree. It's like the horns of the hair. You don't look (?) the hair don't have horns even in India! So it's (?) possibility. You no more look for pith in becoming than a sensible person goes looking in a fig tree for flowers because you just won't find flowers in a fig-tree. In the same way you

just won't find any pith in things that are becoming. It's quite simple concrete language. No talk about anatta, no talk about Sunyata or anything abstract like that. No pith in processes any more than flowers in fig-trees. So the bhikkhu realizes this and in that way he sloughs off his old skin and emerges a new snake. Then

'In whom there inly lurk no spites,
Freed from becoming this or that'

Now what's the word for 'spites'? 'Vitivatto'. I'll look that up in the dictionary ... it's one of those words you find in the Sutta Nipata which are not on or is not often find in other parts of the Canon. Ah. 'Kopa', ill temper, anger, grudge. It seems more like 'grudge', even resentment, in a temper. It seems rather a difficult word to ... 'spite', ill-tempered, viciousness, something like that; rather nasty; malice even.

(Transcriber's note: the above explanation refers to the word 'Kopa', and not 'vitivatto' which appears in the following line)

Is the 'spites' plural the same as 'spite'?

S: Yes it is. In the Pali it is plural - 'kopa'.

___: The same as the English 'spite' without the 's'.

___: (Inaudible)

S: Yes, it's a plural noun in the Pali. It's rather sharper than grudge, more vicious. (Sort of) vicious jabs.

___: (Inaudible)

S: Yes, right.

___: (Inaudible)

S: Yes, very much so.

___: Guenther translates (?) in Mind and Buddhist Psychology. (Inaudible)

S: It may not be this but there is that list of defilements. 'In whom there inly lurk no spites'. It's something also within. The suggestion is that it's something you don't even express (outward) like the snake's spit as it were. It's something that's inside, some sort of nasty venomous sort of feeling towards people that you don't actually let out. It's a bit more active (as it were) innerly active than say resentment is. It's something rather sharp and spiteful but you keep it within; it lurks within. It is a rather nasty state. So 'In whom there inly lurk no spites, freed from becoming this or that'. 'Freed from becoming this or that.' This again is quite a common sort of idiom. It means freedom from becoming (re-becoming) anything conditioned as we would say. Usually we go from this one kind of conditioning or (conditionedness) to another. May be one extreme to another. But one who has become free, who has sloughed [30] off this skin. The results are he does not do that any more. There is no

sort of oscillating between different kinds of becoming.

Sagaramati: (Inaudible)

What determines (a moment), how does it arise?

S: It's the play of all unskilful mental states.

Sagaramati: I mean in the unconditioned how does it arise if it's free from 'that'?

S: But this is a very difficult metaphysical question basically. Early Buddhism of course does not go into that. It maintains the imperceptibility of the beginning of the samsaric process. One can only say if one has to give any sort of answer to it at all is that as it were in the depths of our being we are unconditioned, as well as conditioned, and we have to operate from those two concepts. You can even go further and say that in the depths of our being we are neither conditioned nor unconditioned, and that absence of both the conditioned and the unconditioned in the depth of our being that is the true unconditionedness which is neither conditioned nor unconditioned, the real sunyata, the great sunyata, that those two possibilities are both within us but what we must not do is to try to track it back to the beginning and sort of posit an original unconditioned and then try to find out how the conditioned arose within that. That of course Buddhism says is quite futile. But here and now it's as though we have to recognize the unconditioned is within us too as it were struggling to emerge, just speaking metaphorically. Otherwise from the conditioned we can never account from the arising of the unconditioned, in a sense the unconditioned does not arise, can't arise. But this is a very difficult question indeed. It's as though the individual comprises both the conditioned and the unconditioned as possibilities. So in that sense we can use this language of the individual being in the depth of its being as it were enlightened. We can use that sort of language. But it's the sort of language that we must use only very cautiously and not loosely; use it very seriously and sincerely, otherwise not at all, certainly not in the loose flippant way that many of the so-called Zen people use it. I've talked about that in one of the seminars. But as it were here and now from instant to instant we are a being, an individual, who can either be a Buddha or an ordinary person just as he or she chooses. This is what it's really like. But we've got into a habit of not being a Buddha so it's rather difficult to get out of it to say the least, but we can. It's as though we are something or someone who has for a long time chosen not to be a Buddha and the longer you go on making that choice or allowing that choice to be made, the more difficult it becomes to reverse that choice or undo that choice.

Marichi: (That we fight usually, not making that choice?)

___: (Unclear)

: (I can't) understand the word 'choice'. Who makes that choice?

S: That you which is as it were neither enlightened nor unenlightened. Both of these possibilities are open.

: (Unclear) Is there a choice there, is there automatic ...?

S: Well, at that level the word 'choice', 'automatic' don't have a [31] meaning that we can bear on these other levels. We can speak of it as a choice but really the word does not have any

meaning - we need a totally different word. But it is not as though the Buddha becomes not-the-Buddha, it's more like - to put into ... to speak in a way even more profoundly - it's something even more basic than the Buddha as opposed to non-Buddha to decide whether to be a Buddha - or a non-Buddha. This is where the Mahayana degree of Maha-sunyata comes in. That sunyata within which there is neither sunyata or non-sunyata, neither conditioned nor unconditioned. That's the only sort of way we can think of it at all, although paradoxically and very inadequately. But not that the conditioned within time ever becomes the unconditioned. We can no more understand how the conditioned ascends into the unconditioned than we can understand how the unconditioned ever descends into the conditioned - both are impossibilities. So the way in which I have put it is not to be taken as it were literally but only as a means of avoiding those two extremes if one had to talk about what happens at all. Any way this has taken us a very long way from the simple unsophisticated language of the Sutta Nipata. So:

'Freed from becoming this or that,
In whom uncertainty is quenched,
Cut short within, so none remains.'

What is uncertainty? Let's have a look at that. Severn refers. 'Vidhupita'. That's quite a difficult expression. (Bhante looks at various translations.) Chalmers translates:

Whose every theme of thought
has through the furnace passed
to ordered disciplines.

___: It's very different.

S: Whereas Hare translates:

In whom uncertainty is quenched
Cut short within, so none remains.

S: Let's have a look; this is the example of richness of language of the Sutta Nipata. The other verses are practically the same really, or are essentially the same; this is the first time that there has been a really serious difference. But Chalmers' translation - as far as I remember from my past study, Chalmers is a bit idiosyncratic. I rather suspect that Hare's is closest to the real meaning. Let's have a look at those two words.

___: They aren't quite usually exclusive.

S: No they aren't.

Where does Chalmers get his furnace from rather than quenching? It takes rather a long time to look in the Pali dictionary; it's not arranged according to the English alphabet, it's arranged according to the Indian alphabet. It could be 'scattered' or 'destroyed'. Well one could say 'passed through the furnace', but that's putting it as it were more positively. Certainly there is no reference to 'burning' or 'passing through a furnace' in the dictionary here.

Marichi: (Inaudible)

S: Yes. [32] 'Scattered or destroyed', and it refers to the Vidhupita. Yes, then we will take that. 'Quenched' - if you leave aside the implied reference to water, then 'quenched' is more accurate though according to the dictionary, it is 'scattered', 'destroyed'. (Pause.) 'Vitakka' must be 'vitakka' - thought in the ordinary sense.

Jinamata: Do (?) translate as 'uncertainty' there? The word for thought?

S: It's more like 'wandering thought'; it's not really uncertainty. 'Vitaka' is really 'thought' and you can have thought in an ordinary positive state but you can also have it as a rather diffuse rather wandering sort of thought. The two meanings aren't really very clearly distinguished. So whose wandering thoughts are all scattered or whose thought is quenched in that sort of sense. But ordered discipline - it's rather difficult to make out - so none remains. 'Asesa' means without remainder, without end ...

Marichi: (?)

S: Chalmers reads quite a lot into the text sometimes.

Jinamata: Like if it says 'where no wandering thought remains' he translates it, he says that means ordered discipline where there is wandering thought (?)

S: No, that seems to be Chalmers own bluff, there is certainly no reference to discipline in the text.

Dhammadinna: If there is no wandering thought that seems to imply (there are dhyanas which (??))

S: Well it suggests that more.

Dhammadinna: (?)

S: No it does not, no.

Marichi: (Inaudible)

S: So let's take Chalmers as having been a little bit as it were imaginative, the suggestion more is that 'wandering thoughts' have all being scattered, they've been cut short within as it were and one is left in a sort of 'wandering thought-less state' equivalent perhaps to a dhyana sort of experience.

Dhammadinna: (Inaudible)

S: Yes, right, yes.

Marichi: (Inaudible) but it is confusing ...

S: It's a more sort of intellectual explanation or interpretation. This is what result is not ordered discipline is a higher more unified, less scattered state of consciousness.

Marichi: (?)

S: Yes, indeed.

Jinamata: It could be (?) (Several voices)

S: Yes, the word is definitely 'vitakka' which is discursive thought, this is exactly the same as you get in the first dhyana and which you [33] don't get in the second one, which is free from discursive thought or is free from thought - taking thought in the quite ordinary every day sense of no thought. Anyway let's go on.

Who neither hastes nor lags behind,
Hath all this hindrance overcome

Now that's quite important. You neither haste - which is quite distinct from doing things quickly and energetically - nor do you lag behind. Chalmers agrees about that but he's got a 'maze' instead of 'hindrances'; the word is 'papanca' - ah! 'papanca'! 'Papanca' is usually translated as sort of 'multifariousness', a sort of entanglement; something rather complicated. This is a very rich and very as it were 'primitive'

[The] Sanskrit word papanca - the 'manifoldness' it's usually translated. But it's not only 'manifoldness' because that could suggest something harmonious, it's something all mixed-up, it's something entangled, something complicated. 'Maze' is not bad but it's not really good enough. But it's certainly not just 'hindrance' - that entanglement is a hindrance but it is not just a hindrance, it's a particular kind of hindrance. It's as if the world itself, the whole samsara is sometimes called 'papanca'. The Entanglement with a capital E, that would be the equivalent of the Samsara; this mess (?), with complexity, it's even more than complexity, it's mix-up, with multiplicity - there is so much of it, it's so complicated. So 'interwoven', 'tangle' - 'tangle' is probably the best word. It's a great big tangle. So he 'Who neither hastes nor lags behind' - 'lags behind' in other words overcome the great tangle of existence - he becomes free from this world and the next. He's sloughed off his outworn skin just like the snake. (Pause)

___: (Too faint)

S: No, that's rather different. That is supposed to refer to the bodhisattva activity without beginning, without end - one pure continuous flow. That's different but it's a very good counterpart as it were of a tangle, this is the knot without beginning, without end but it is clear and clean as it were but the tangle is just a tangle. You could say the knot, the endless knot is the skilful, even Transcendental counterpart of that unskilful or mundane tangle. When it's all sorted out, it's not a tangle, that beautiful endless knot. Without beginning, without end - (this is) the bodhisattva's completely spontaneous activity, in time and yet beyond time ...

Marichi: (More) a living pattern ...

S: A living pattern, yes, but not in the sort of reactive sense of repetition. Anyway, let's go on.

___ 'Knows of the world All is unreal'

Here of course the translator has just given you that line which changes each time, he is not repeating the whole refrain as it were.

___ 'Knows of the world All is unreal'

Here again in the original you've got this word 'Sara' and again the word 'papanca'. He knows that this entanglement is without any essence of its own - this is the meaning.

Siddhiratna: Meaning is unreal.

[34]

S: Knows without greed 'All is unreal'

Knows without passion 'All is unreal'

Knows without hate 'All is unreal'

Knows undeluded 'All is unreal'

This is not clear from this translation by Hare that these lines all go with

Who neither hastes nor lags behind,
Hath all this hindrance overcome
Knows without greed 'All is unreal'

Those two lines* go in each case with each individual line, then of course the refrain follows

That monk quits bounds both here and yon
As snake his old and worn-out skin.

I personally wish the translator would always give every verse in full without this sort of condensation, it only saves a few lines after all.

Jinamata: So lines 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 go with...

S: They are verses, not lines.

Jinamata: Verses. All of them 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 go with verse 8?

S: Yes. No there is the verse - verse 8 is

Who neither hastes nor lags behind
Hath all this hindrance overcome
That monk quits bounds both here and yon
As snake his old and worn-out skin.

and verse 9 is

Who neither hastes nor lags behind
Knows of the worlds 'All is unreal'
That monk quits bounds both here and yon
As snake his old and worn-out skin.

and verse 10 is

Who neither hastes nor lags behind
Knows without greed 'All is unreal'
That monk quits bounds both here and yon
As snake his old and worn-out skin.

and verse 11 is

Who neither hastes nor lags behind
Knows without passion 'All is unreal'
That monk quits bounds both here and yon
As snake his old and worn-out skin.

and 12 is

Who neither hastes nor lags behind
Knows without hate 'All is unreal'
That monk quits bounds both here and yon
As snake his old and worn-out skin.

and then 13

Who neither hastes nor lags behind
Knows undeluded 'All is unreal'
That monk quits bounds both here and yon
As snake his old and worn-out skin.

*Transcriber's Note: I think we are dealing with the first line only and the last two of the 'refrain' - see quotes below

[35]

S: I think the general sense of this is quite clear.

Sagaramati: Why it (can't be translated as 'hindrance' because the traditional five hindrances?)

S: It could be that but the word is not 'hindrance' - not 'nivarana'. Then 14

In whom no leanings lurk whate'er
Who roots of wrong hath rooted out
That monk quits bounds both here and yon
As snake his old and worn-out skin.

Let's see what word he has translated as 'leaning' 'anusaya', which means more like a sort of basis, a rest, a support - inclination. And the roots of wrong are the 'akusala mula', the unskilful root; in whom there is no tendency towards anything unskilful, who has in fact uprooted all unskilful mental states.

: Would 'leaning' be something like 'biased views'.

S: I was wondering whether the word here was 'asrava' because that does mean 'bias' but it is not actually ...

Then 15

In whom no yearnings lurk whate'er,
Cause of return to these bounds here
That monk quits bounds both here and yon
As snake his old and worn-out skin.

Then 16

In whom no longings lurk whate'er
Forces that forge becoming's bond
That monk quits bounds both here and yon
As snake his old and worn-out skin.

: Can (you go back to number fifteen?) What is the Pali for 'yearning'?

S: Fifteen 'yearning' ... ah! It's anxiety, care, distress. It's a bit different from yearning isn't it? It's more like 'worry'. It's anxiety, care, distress and it's in the plural ...

Sagaramati: What is the actual Pali word?

S: 'Darathaja'. 'Daratha' is of course the anxiety, 'ja' is a verb signifying to be born - born cravings, born anxieties, which comes into existence with your lives, (it's like) 'padmaja' it's lotus-born. 'Darathaja' is not born anxieties but the anxieties-born.

Marichi: (?)

S: These terms don't occur at all in as it were general Buddhism. The terminology of the Sutta Nipata is quite rich in this sort of way; the reference here in the dictionary is after the Sutta Nipata. There is one in the Jataka too - (it's) more anxieties.

Then 17

Who of five obstacles is rid,
Gone stir, doubt-crossed and barb-immune,
That monk quits bounds both here and yon
As snake his old and worn-out skin.

What are those five obstacles? The 'nirvaranas', they are actually mentioned for the first time in the Sutta - the hindrances, we all [36] know what they are of course though they may not necessarily have that sort of technical meaning, it may be 'nivaranas' or obstacles or hindrances in a very general sense, but the list is, of course, the kama, the craving; anger; sloth and torpor and hurry and worry and doubt, there is doubt. Those are the five 'nivaranas'. Let's just check that it does say 'five' - 'panca', yes five. At this stage they are not necessarily mentioned, it may be that we don't really know but certainly the later (?)

___: I can't seem to understand the English.

S: 'The monk who is rid of five obstacles, upon which there is no stir, upon which doubt is crossed and who has become immune to barb, that monk ...'

Voice interrupting: What is 'barb'?

S: 'barb' is the arrow ...

___: What arrow?

S: He no longer feels the arrow sticking in, the arrow of course is dukkha - who is free from 'dukkha'

___: What's 'gone stir'?

S: All disturbance gone, all passions tamed and calm of mind. It's that sort of state, 'gone stir'. Hare is very good as a translator in a sense that he really does translate, the English is sometimes very difficult due to extreme condensation because the Pali is naturally terser than the English but he's made English terser than the Pali which is quite an achievement, it means using expressions like 'gone stir', all passions extinct, all disturbance gone.

So having gone through the whole Sutta more or less, what sort of impression do you get now after that quick look through every single verse?

Marichi: (?)

S: (?) not in a straining nervous way. What Sort of ideal do you think he has disclosed?

___: The heroic ideal

S: The heroic ideal. It's very difficult. It's also in a way very psychological, there is a lot about mental states, isn't there? There is nothing about dharma, for instance, there is not really anything about 'sila', is there? There are quite a few references to mental states - a mental state that he's got rid of - so that suggests a sort of inverted commas 'psychological attitude', an attitude by the mind - the mind is important, your state of mind is important.

Sagaramati: The dharma is more like the means.

S: Yes it would be more like a means of attaining a certain mental state.

(Inaudible)

[37]

S: It's very mind-orientated, you are working directly on the mind, are concerned directly with the mind, not with external things, not even with rules; there is not a single rule that you should do this, or do that in an ethical sense.

It's very much you are working on oneself ...

S: Yes, it's quite characteristic of Buddhism at this stage; there is no reference to Vinaya rules; there is no reference to things the good monk should do or should not do - he is working on his own sort of psychic raw material all the time, he is refining it.

Padmaraja: It's as if coming into contact with the intensity of Buddhism at that time, the momentum that it must have been at, the other stuff was not quite so necessary ...

S: Right

Padmaraja: Direct experience by following the living example of the Buddha.

Jinamata: Surely that applies to different individuals now as well ...

S: One could say that though obviously modern life is much more tangled than life in those days especially for people living in cities - so many more stimuli.

Jinamata: May be some people need to go more by a rule, whilst others don't ...

S: I am not sure what you mean by going by rules, or needing to go by rules?

Jinamata: Following certain ways of living or modes of living without maybe necessarily understanding why although arising spontaneously out of them but they lead to a different state of mind.

S: Yes, that may well be true though I think that even so one has to be really careful. I think it applies to a quite elementary stage not even if the spiritual life in a way, it's more as it were cultural.

Voices: (Unclear.)

S: The observing of the rules. In a way it's very easy - it's difficult to observe rules but again in another sense it's very easy.

: What can you do (?) external sense, so ...

S: Yes, at the same time I don't want to sort of seem to adopt a pseudo libertarian sort of view which as far as some people are concerned would be really premature, but certainly it's the mental state and one's individual responsibility which is important, and working on one's mental state. Perhaps one can put it in this way: following the rules is OK providing you constantly check that the rules are really helping and you if necessary change them from time to time - it's principles that you must follow essentially, the rules may vary. We are going to talk about this a bit on the convention in connection with vows.

Jinamata: Perhaps (?) the Ten Precepts ... ?

[38]

S: The Ten Precepts are principles not rules that set specific things that you should do or not do; that's why the English translation stresses the mental side much more, doesn't it? That brings it out much more, yes, 'Sikkhapadam' is a factor in training. It does not say mental

training actually - 'bhikṣa' (or 'vikṣa'?) It's a factor in training, a factor in education. That factor in one's training or in one's education which consists in - in the case of the first precept as we say - abstaining from injury to living literally breathing beings, but in what way you should abstain is a matter of the rules or the vows - which may change from time to time. One way is that you become a vegetarian, adopt a vow not to eat meat or fish. You don't fool yourself that exhausts the whole potential of that principle, it's one way of observing it in one particular situation, one aspect of one's life. That specific application becomes a sort of precept or vow but behind it there is the principle of non-violence, or the training factor which is the attempt to lead a non-violent life - not harming any living beings. Certainly this particular sutta is very much concerned with essentials. You notice also there is no direct reference even to any associated living, so you are on your own, (although) it is likely you are in contact with other people because there is the possibility of anger arising and that is usually in connection with other people for instance, otherwise it's as though you are on your own. Your relations with other people is not considered; the relation with yourself, with your own thoughts, that is what's being considered. One could say there is no reference to 'sila' directly, the reference is rather to samadhi and prajna. 'Samadhi' in respect of the thought - all those kinds of multifarious thoughts and unskilful thoughts which are abandoned, they're just sloughed-off; and 'Prajna' in the sense of the vision when you see, when you know that all is unreal. That very much is 'prajna'. All is pithless, essenceless. We don't find any ultimate value in anything therefore you don't take refuge in anything. It does not even say you take refuge in the Buddha. There is no reference to the Buddha, Dharma or Sangha; no reference to the Middle Way directly; no reference to the Eightfold Path as such; no reference to the Four Noble Truths. It's a very, as it were, primitive and germinal form of Buddhism, very seminal form of Buddhism in its very early days

___: I get the impression that it's a song of joy and inspiration.

S: Very much so.

___: 'Theragatha'

S: 'Theragatha' yes. This is why I use the word at the beginning 'ballad' because these suttas have been described as ballads. Some if you like recounted by the Buddhist bhikkhus who wandered from place to place to remind themselves what the ideal was and also to share it with other people, to impart it to other people.

Jinamata: (Inaudible)

S: No to meditation as such, there is not. The theme itself is there but the term is not. It's as though they are so immersed in it, they have not even got round to finding a term for it, a name for it.

Jinamata: (?)

S: All right even any meditation classes. It's just the individual struggling with and working on his own mind, getting rid of his own [39] unskilful thoughts, seeing through things and in that way becoming free here and in the future - here and now and in the future. So there were no regulations, there were no ethical rules, much less still any monastic rules. So you've got this bare word 'bhikkhu' which here certainly means the man who lives on alms - on bhikṣa.

You've got no Sangha; there is no reference to the Buddha, or to the Dharma as a systematic teaching - a very early, very primitive stage or at least phase of the teaching, of the Dharma.

___: It gives somewhat a historical idea of what the situation in the Buddha's teaching would have been at that time, the way he was teaching, what he may have been saying.

S: It does. It's as though the Buddha is saying: What really is a bhikkhu? You are supposed to be bhikkhus - you are wandering about living on alms, what are you supposed to be? You are supposed to be like the snake, you sort of sloughed-off all those old things, all those unskilful thoughts. So what sort of unskilful thoughts? Then he gives a whole sort of list. Not as a list but he mentions from time to time, may be on different occasions but they've been strung together here and brought into one particular ballad, one particular sutta. It has a refrain. You can imagine the monks chanting this refrain as they moved about. The refrain makes it easier to remember. You can imagine:

That monk quits bounds both here and yon
As snake his old and worn-out skin.

So you can imagine sort of chanting it and feeling that they sloughed off their skin, they were new men, they were real bhikkhus wandering around, living on alms, with nothing to worry about, nothing to bother about, enjoying their delusion-free and defilement-free state of mind.

___: (?)

S: Yes indeed, except of course probably at this early stage, certainly at the very early stage, there is no rainy season because that came after some years when people started grumbling and criticizing the bhikkhus for wandering about when it was still the rainy season, and trampling upon growing things. Then the Buddha said 'you'd better stay put in one place as some of the other wanderers do during the rainy season. And then they must have thought what we are going to do is meditate but some of them did not need to meditate, (I mean) their minds were free, their minds were clear, well let's string together some of the Buddha's teaching; what you remember, what I remember. Let's make a nice refrain, put it all together, and they start chanting it, and singing it, and when they left the retreat maybe they continued doing it, and after the Buddha's death all these things, these ballads and sayings and discourses, they all remembered and collected, and people learnt the whole corpus of them - the whole body or collection of them - and hand it down to their disciples, and that's the way in which the scriptures began. They were written down years and years, even centuries later. But these certainly were very early, one can be pretty certain that something like this particular ballad was in circulation in the Buddha's own day, giving an exposition of what the Buddha taught at least from a certain point of view. It may be that that particular way of looking at the teaching appealed to certain people. There is no story here. We know that the Buddha did tell stories or parables - others might [40] have remembered the parables better and repeated those. We know that the Buddha sometimes spoke in what we call verses - gathas - as in the case of the verses in the Udanas. It's very rough and ready verse - sort of rhythmical, sort of metrical, without line of course. He does not appear to have composed regular ballads or sort of strings of verses as far as we know but those among his disciples who were gifted in that particular way - and we know some of them were - must have found it quite easy to do this: just take the teaching and string it together in this way; quite easy in memorization. And they probably did enjoy doing it. There is quite a swing to this, especially

through the refrain - 'That monk quits bounds both here and yon as snake his old and worn-out skin.' That comes at the end of every verse.

Jinamata: (It feels clear and clean to me, there is no (?))

S: Not even any devotion.

Jinamata: No cultural ...

S: No (cultural ...). Not even any culture. The only reference to culture in a way is the bare word 'bhikkhu' which certainly suggests someone who lives on alms. So if you live on alms, there must be others who offer you alms, but that's the only suggestion. Nothing beyond that as far as I've noticed. There are references to various objects of nature; there is the reference to a snake; the reference to the lake; the lotus blooms; the reference to the swiftly flowing stream; the bridge of reeds which of course is man-made but the only actual artefact mentioned, is the only sign of cultural civilization in the whole sutta the bridge of reeds. Even the bridge is made of reeds you notice. There is the reference to the flowers of the fig tree which don't even exist. There are just the very few natural objects are mentioned, and there is the most distant suggestion of other people merely in the use of the term 'bhikkhu' otherwise it's entirely your own mental state, your own insight as it were - no culture.

: This kind of (text) probably appeals to (?)

S: It will probably appeal to the scientists. What do you say Suvajra? As it were the intellectuals. (Some interruptions - inaudible) This is very much the Ouspensky-Gurdjieff approach, except that Ouspensky became very theoretical and as it were philosophical. It's very much the approach of some of Gurdjieff's teaching actually.

___: (?)

S: May be you are, may be you are not a literary lady after all! (Pause) Any further points or further questions ... It's also very remote from the modern Theravada with its insistence on rules, its preoccupation with rules, all that kind of thing ... though they have - all thanks to them - handed down this particular scripture, text/tradition but their own current practice or latter practice is not very much in accordance with this at all. In fact if you try to adopt this attitude as a Buddhist in a Theravada country I think they probably would not be happy at all happy with you.

: There is a lot of confusion.

S: There are no temples, no monasteries, there is not even a vihara, there is only the bhikkhu wandering from place to place. There are [41] no rules, there is no puja even, there is no learning, there is no literature, so it shows with how very little you can - I won't say get by because you end up enlightened - but there is no term even for Enlightenment is there? Nothing is separated out - you see what I mean? And there is this overall image of the snake and this in a way dominates the whole sutta; the bhikkhu - the new man - is just like the snake, he's sloughed off the old skin, and all these different (viharas) just like different scales on that old skin, they all [have] been cast off, they just aren't there any more - you are completely free from (them). But without going to any question of 'atta-anatta', you are there.

Even the word for 'snake' is not usual - it's 'uraga', 'uraga'. I wonder what 'uraga' literally means, I will have a look and then we'd better close. (Pause.)

(Transcriber's note: general conversation - not clear and not directly concerned with the Sutta)

S: ... just wandering and people feed you ... I am afraid many of our friends aren't prepared for quite so much of work on themselves as is suggested by the ... (sutta) I think we ourselves must be not in too much of a hurry to continue the existing culture, except (for) exceptional gems like Blake's poetry, things of that sort but not to bother about being devoid of culture. This reminds me of something Devamitra told me that a friend - in fact someone who is virtually a friend with a capital F now - in Norwich. It's the chap who started up the Buddhist group there sometime ago but was quite unable to make a success of it and is very glad that the Friends have started up, he says after reading some of our literature and having been in contact with Devamitra and Sona, he said he only had one criticism of the Friends, so Devamitra reported that we did not have enough culture but in the light of that particular sutta, well, does one need culture? I told Devamitra that the real answer to that would have been or should have been that what we are concerned with is something much more basic than culture out of which we hope eventually a culture will spring.

___: (?)

S: Yes, well in a sense a new Shakespeare. Why not?

___: (?)

S: Yes, right. So use them to spark you off, and of course we must not mistake the last throes of a dying culture for the first signs of the new life of the new. The dying convulsions of Catholicism are held as the signs of the coming of the age of the Aquarius.

(Transcriber's note: general conversation, unclear and not related particularly to the subject of sutta)

S: Ah, that's interesting: 'ura' is the breast or chest; 'ga' means to go. It's the chest-goer; one who creeps along on his chest or breast, i.e. snake. (Laughter) In typical language he creeps on his belly you could say - 'uraga'. (Pause.)

Any further points from anyone?

It really does tend to show that Buddhism - the word 'Buddhism' can mean so many different things. Well, this is Buddhism, if this is not Buddhism, what is Buddhism? But could you find anywhere in the Buddhist world where Buddhists are actually living like this, and also practising - if that's not too self-conscious living in this way. To a slight extent perhaps but in another way not quite because if they really were working on their own minds etc - as no doubt many Buddhists do in many parts of the world still - [42] but so many of them (?) could also be bothered by all sorts of unnecessary things as well which they have to be concerned with or observe. I am quite sure that in some of the Theravada countries many of the bhikkhus do work on themselves in this sort of way but they've also got to keep up certain appearances not to offend the lay people and keep in with the government etc, things not mentioned here, hardly seem to exist. This is the open country, the forest, the streams, the

villages scattered throughout the land, and you must go to some of these back-doors, stand there with your bowl and get some food, move on: that's your life, and you are struggling with your own mind all the time.

___: Do you think it's (posed) here as an ideal then Bhante?

S: I think it is.

___: If it's an ideal it's going to mean that somebody to give the alms (and that?) ...

S: That's true.

: But how practical is that kind of lifestyle?

S: Well the point is: that is the essence of it really. Is it even the need to move from village to village the essence of it. Is even being a bhikkhu the essence of it - I mean 'bhikkhu' in the sense of being an 'alms-man'?

Marichi: That's the cultural conditions there ...

S: That is just a touch of the cultural. That was possible in the India of those days; it's not possible now, even in India in many areas. Is that an essential part of the ideal? It makes the practice of it gloriously simple. I think it is possible that the more complex the culture and the civilization became and the more complex - not to say complicated - your own relationship with it - the part which you play in it - then the more difficult it becomes. Those two are (not impossible)

: It seems more mental content to cope with (?)

S: At this particular level or this particular stage, take it very literally, perhaps it was a bit unusual even in those days, but taking it in its very extreme form that you are a bhikkhu, you are an alms-man, you are wandering through this vast country - India - which at that time was quite thinly populated and all the time you are just in contact with nature, you're wandering through vast forests, along little forest paths or trails, and all day you don't see a single human being, your only contact with other human beings, with society, with culture is when you come to a little village, surrounded by fields in the midst of the forest and you just go to somebody's door and you just get some food. May be you don't even talk to them. And then you pass on, that's your only connection and that's your life. Otherwise there are just the trees, the flowers, the sky; you take your bath in the stream, you wander on, you sit down under a tree, (?) what we call 'meditate', that's the extremest form' ...

Marichi: We have got that in England, there are men who tramp the roads ...

[43]

S: There are men who tramp around but there are roads. There weren't even many roads, just tracks, maybe not even that. But yes, some men have lived like that even in England. And, also there is the climate in India, that's much more helpful as also in Ancient Greece, you could live a bit like that in Ancient Greece. Socrates lived a bit like that, though he lived at home, though he had a wife. In his early days he worked for his living but it seems as though

in his later life he did not bother about anything at all. He just got up and his wife apparently got some food from somewhere and put it in front of him before he went out and he put on his cloak and strolled out into the market place and spent the day talking and someone invited him home for a meal and he went and had the meal, then went home to bed. In his famous speech of apology before his (not real apology) accusers, when he was invited to suggest a sentence for himself because that was the Greek custom or law that the person who prosecuted you suggested the sentence and you suggested the counter-sentence and the Assembly chose between you. So he suggested ironically, but at the same time seriously, that he should be given free food for life. There was a place called 'Partheneum' I think it was, where people who'd been given what we would call the 'Freedom of the City' could go every day and eat free. He suggested that they should give him this privilege. So, it's very much like that for the Bhikkhu, you know, you're supported by the people, by society, by the state. It's much the same sort of idea. And he'd be free to philosophise then and sting them. (Laughter.) Like a gadfly, which was his function, his duty as he conceived it. It's much more sort of civically oriented than the Indian ideal but it's not dissimilar in a way. So, the principle of the thing no doubt can still be practised by us here and now, but it becomes much more difficult owing to the sheer complexity of society and the relationships in which we are involved within that society - political, economic, legal, domestic, personal and so on. In our case it's not as though we've got one single simple skin to slough off. There is a multitude of encasings of various kinds you know. Strait-jackets! - one within the other. It's not just a simple matter of sloughing them off any more. It's much more difficult than that, but still it can be done. There still is a snake inside trying to get out!

Jinamata: There are, of course, other people who lived just on the road who are robbers.

S: Pardon?

[44]

Jinamata: There are also - it's also not just a condition of living on the roads, or in the forest because there are people who do that and are robbers.

S: Yes. But robbers are more dependent on society because they, instead of just taking a very little as the monk does, or the bhikkhu does, then they want to take, by force, quite a lot.

Marichi: It's like ways of using your squat. You can use it for anarchistic reasons or ...

Jinamata: What I'm trying to say is it's not just the conditions, it's the mental state.

S: No, right. Culturally speaking there is not all that difference between the bhikkhu and the robber, the brigand, yes.

Jinamata: Yes, I'm trying to say but the external conditions look the same.

S: Right, yes. They could both lurk in the forest. And the bhikkhu goes up to somebody's door in broad daylight with his bowl and the robber creeps up at night with his stick or his sword, or knife, breaks in. He may not get very much more than the bhikkhu got, but he's got it in a completely different way.

Marichi: Do you want to carry on going through this at the same sort of pace?

S: I think so!

Marichi: Because I was photocopying it, I want to know whether to proceed ...

S: I had no idea that we'd get through the whole of it, or not even the first chapter. If we get even through the first chapter I'll be very pleased, but I doubt if we'll do that.

Marichi: The chapter of the snake or just a bit beyond that?

S: Yes, I think we'll just continue at the same pace, which I think will be the natural pace at which to continue. I don't think we need to sort of rush through. Because with this sort of text we can take it up from time to time, so if I come again, we can do a few more suttas. Or may be on some other occasion completely, do those that we haven't been able to do this time.

Marichi: (Unclear.)

S: No, I don't think you need bother at all, no. Shall we call It a day then?

___: Are you doing this each week for a certain period?

S: Just for the five weeks I am going to be here. So, we will do at least five suttas. I've selected this text partly because it's intrinsically very valuable, and partly because I felt that we could probably get through one complete self-contained sutta each evening, which is a bit more satisfactory than getting half way through [45] something and then having to stop, or to just do a very small part of something because the suttas are self-contained, complete. So, we'll carry on with the next sutta. We've got some quite good and quite well known ones here. The next one we've got is Dhaniya, which is a very good one in dialogue form between the Buddha and a typical layman, and Mara coming in at the end. And after that there is the rhinoceros, which is a very famous one, which is quite long. Then we come back to a farmer. And there is another little dialogue. Then there is one on suffering where the Buddha is questioned by a goddess; a goddess comes into it. So in that way we can go on for five weeks and have quite a good glimpse into this very early phase of Buddhism, which is very interesting; very much like the UDANA-type phase.

Some of you are really dropping! I think we'd better disperse. I take it that most of you would rather not have a puja? How do you feel? Be quite frank and honest.

Marichi: Well, I am going home to bed.

S: Who would like one, even if there are only a few of us? But, say just what you feel. There are no rules, just imagine you are a bhikkhu wandering from place to place! Please yourself! Whatever would be best and most skilful for you. There is no rule that 'thou shall stay for the puja!' (Laughter.) Otherwise 'thou art a naughty girl!' or a bad bhikkhu!

___: I am not staying.

___: I want to go home.

S: All right.

___: I want to go home as well.

___: It will come out no one wants to stay at all!

___: I do!

S: I think I am going home too. (Laughter.) I do feel quite tired actually. I'll would like to stay with Padmaraja in a way but ...

(Break in tape. Then the Seminar proper starts.)

S: (?) straight through from beginning to end and then after that we'll go through it verse by verse - with somebody reading the verse each time. Who would like to read the whole thing?

___: I will.

S: Go on then.

___: Making sure I know where it ends. There are thirty four verses.

S: Thirty four verses yes. It's E.M. Hare's translation.

[46]

DHANIYA SUTTA

Dhaniya

'I've boiled my broth, I've drawn the milk'
Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya.
I dwell with mates beside Mahi.
Roofed is my hut, the fire burns bright.
So if thou wish, rain, deva, rain!

The Master

'I've foiled my wrath, I've fertile mind'
Thus spake the Master in reply.
'I dwell one night beside Mahi
Open my hut, cooled down my fire.
So if thou wish, rain, deva, rain!'

Dhaniya

'No gnats, no gadflies here are found.'
Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya.
'In rich grass meads my cattle roam.
Well can they brave what storm may come.
So if thou wish, rain, deva, rain!'

The Master

'Well fashioned was the bonded raft'
Thus spake the Master in reply.
But none's the need of raft for him
Crossed and yon-fared, the flood-tide ridden.
So if thou wish, rain, deva, rain.'

Dhaniya

'Obedient is my wife, no trull.'
Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya.
'Long hath she been a loving mate.
No rumoured wrong I hear of her.
So if thou wish, rain, deva, rain!'

The Master

'Obedient is my mind and freed.'
Thus spake the Master in reply.
'Long hath it been well quickened, tamed.
No ill is found or known in me.
So, if thou wish, rain, deva, rain!'

Dhaniya

'By earnings I support myself.
Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya.
'Hale sons and I together dwell,
No rumoured wrong I hear of them!
So if thou wish, rain, deva, rain!'

The Master

'Servant to none whate'er am I.'
Thus spake the Master in reply.
I fare the world with wages won
Nor find, nor know the need to earn.
So, if thou wish, rain, deva, rain!'

[47]

Dhaniya

'See here are goodly cows and calves.'
Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya.
'And here are breeders great with calf,
and here the bull, Lord of the herd.
So, if thou wish, rain, deva, rain.'

The Master

'No goodly cows and calves are here.'
Thus spake the Master in reply.
'Here are no breeders great with calf;
here is no bull, Lord of the herd.
So, if thou wish, rain, deva, rain. '

Dhaniya

'The stakes are sunk, unshakeable.'
Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya.
'The rush-made cords are woven new.
Truly no calves can break out now.
So, if thou wish, rain, deva, rain.'

The Master

'As bull asunder burst his bonds'
Thus did the Master then declare
'As tusker rends his rotten bonds,
I go no more to bed of womb.
So, if thou wish, rain deva, rain.

Then burst a mighty cloud of rain
flooding the hollows and the land.
Whereat the herdsman spake this thing,
hearing the storm and deva roar.

Dhaniya

'Oh gain indeed! No small gain this.
We who have seen the Master here
unto thy refuge seer we go.
Be thou our teacher, mighty sage.
Obedient, the wife and I
Will fare Well-farers godly life.
Yon-farers over birth and death,
enders of ill will we become.

Mara

'Whoso has sons delights in sons.'
Thus Mara spake, the evil one.
'The cowherd too, delights in kine.
Affections are delight to man.
Th' affectionless has no delight.'

The Master

'Whoso has sons grieves over sons.'
Thus spake the Master in reply.
'The cowherd too grieves over kine
Affections are sole grief to man.
The affection-free hath never grief.'

[48]

S: So, that's the Dhaniya Sutta. As you see it's in ballad form, like the sutta we went through last week, the Uragavagga Sutta, the sutta on the snake. But this time it's also in dialogue form. It's a dialogue between Dhaniya and the Buddha, with Mara of course coming in at the end. And it's quite significant, I think, that this is in dialogue form because Dhaniya and the Buddha embody, or even symbolize, two contrasting, not to say contradictory, attitudes towards life. So you get each one speaking in turn. Each putting his point of view forward until of course the point of view of Dhaniya is overcome by, or absorbed in that of the Buddha even though Mara, as it were, takes up the cudgels on Dhaniya's behalf. The name Dhaniya is a bit significant perhaps. 'Dhaniya' is a proper name but it comes from ('Dhanna' or (?)). Dhana originally meant grain. In the early days in an agricultural society obviously, if you had lots of grain, you were a well-to-do person. So 'dhana' came to mean also not just grain in the literal sense but 'wealth', even prosperity. So 'Dhaniya' is the possessor of grain, he is the possessor of wealth, he is the prosperous man. This is quite clearly conveyed by his particular proper name. I don't know what would be the equivalent in English. It would be 'Mr Rich' perhaps - something like that. So 'Dhaniya' is something like 'Mr Rich'. And, of course, though he is a rich man, the possessor of wealth, he is rich and wealthy within the context of a comparatively simple and uncomplex economic life. He apparently is living by the side of a river; he's got a sort of homestead there. He is living there with his wife and his sons and he has herds of cows. So he's got plenty of milk; he probably has plenty of grain too. Perhaps he sells the milk; perhaps he sells the butter, or rather the ghee, and in this way he's prosperous in a modest sort of style. He's got this quite well built house which is well roofed, well-thatched, protects him against the storm and he is living quite happily and comfortably.

So, this is the sort of impression we get from the very first verse. Dhaniya says 'I've boiled my broth, I've drawn the milk.' Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya. 'I dwell with mates besides Mahi. Roofed is my hut, the fire burns bright. So if thou wish, rain, deva, rain.' So, it's probably the evening time; the cows have all been milked, they've done their hard day's work and they have settled down at the end of the day. They're just taking it easy. And it's also, apparently, the rainy season because Dhaniya says he does not care if it rains. And in India of course it only usually rains during the rainy season when it really does rain. So it's an evening time apparently and perhaps, at the beginning, of the rainy season. This expression 'If thou wish rain, deva, rain.' should not be taken as it were too literally. In Pali and in Sanskrit they say the god rains, the deva rains, much as we say 'it rains'. So, just as in the same way, when we say 'it' rains we don't imply that some 'it' is actually existing and raining. In the same way, the deva rains, is just an idiom for 'it rains'. So Dhaniya is saying it's the end of the day. The day's hard work is over. 'I've boiled my broth'. Actually, the translator is paraphrasing a bit here because there is a bit of a pun in the Pali, which the translator has tried to reproduce. Dhaniya says 'I've boiled my broth.' So the Buddha at the beginning of the next verse says 'I've foiled my wrath.' So this reproduces the word play of the Pali in which Dhaniya says 'Pakkodano' and the Buddha says 'Akkodhano'. 'Pakkodano' literally means 'I've cooked my rice.' But this is translated [49] as 'I've boiled my broth', but it's rice, 'odano'; 'I've cooked my rice. The food has been cooked ready for the evening meal. 'The milk has been drawn', that is

to say the cows have been milked. Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya. 'I dwell with mates besides Mahi.' 'Mahi' is the name of a river in India. But it's also significant, 'Mahi' is a term for the earth. Why do you think that is significant?

___: (?)

S: No, not earth in (a) sense of soil but 'earth' in a sense of the world. Dhaniya is everyman, as it were, living on the earth; living in this world. So here is that sort of suggestion when the text speaks of him as dwelling with his mates beside the river Mahi; it's like the river World. So it's a suggestion that Dhaniya is a sort of representative man, everyman - living in the world. Rather pleased with his prosperity. 'I dwell with mates beside Mahi.' - his mates being of course the people who are working with him. They will be working for him, members of the big, joint family perhaps. 'Roofed is my hut, the fire burns bright.' 'Roofed is my hut' - does this remind you of anything that you've read or studied elsewhere?

___: The Udana, The Thatch.

S: Yes, the Udana, it's The Thatch. 'Roofed is my hut' or cottage. My cottage is well thatched. 'Kuti' - it's, well-thatched; the rain can't get in. 'The fire burns bright.' The text really says 'the fire burns' 'ahito gini' - the fire burns. 'So if thou wish, rain deva, rain.' So, what is the herdsman essentially saying? He is saying: I don't care if it rains, I don't care if the rainy season is coming, I am all right.' I am living here snugly in my well-thatched cottage. It is not really 'hut' - he is too prosperous to live in a hut. It's more like 'farmstead' perhaps. I've got my friends about me, my workmates, my relations and we've cooked our food after the hard day's work. The cows have all been milked I don't care what happens. So, it's as though this little verse represents not only the prosperous man but the sort of worldly man. He thinks he is safe, he thinks he is all right, that nothing can touch him even if it does rain very heavily, even if misfortune does come as it were, he will survive it, he is intact, is insulated within his own little self contained world. Do you see? Do you get the idea? (Pause.) So, then, along comes the Buddha! (Laughter.) Along comes the Buddha.

Now in the previous sutta, the Sutta of the Snake, it talked about the monk - the Bhikkhu, and the Bhikkhu we saw literally and originally, is the one who lives on alms. And living on alms, he goes from place to place. He goes from village to village - he wanders, along the forest tracks and whenever, he comes across a little village or some settlement or homestead, he just begs. He gets some food and then he goes on his way. So the Buddha also used to go about in this sort of manner. And in the early days of his ministry, that is to say, in the few years immediately after his Enlightenment, he often used to be wondering on his own from place to place. There were not perhaps many disciples in those days or perhaps the Buddha who was still a relatively young man, liked to go off on his own, walking from place to place. So the Buddha wondering in this sort of way, from place to place, comes to the cottage, the homestead of Dhaniya, apparently arriving in the evening after he had been walking all day. So, you've got this sort of confrontation. Here is Dhaniya all safe, all secure, rather complacent, at the end of the day, and then suddenly, the Buddha comes and it's like a [50] direct challenge, almost a contradiction. Dhaniya says 'I have boiled my broth, I've drawn the milk.' What does the Buddha say? 'I foiled my wrath, I've fertile mind'. Thus spake the Master in reply. 'I dwell one night beside Mahi; opened my hut, cooled down my fire.' So he directly contradicts everything that Dhaniya says. It's as though the spiritual life comes as a sort of direct contradiction to the worldly life. Point by point, as it were, the Buddha refutes

everything that Dhaniya has said. Dhaniya is concerned with his rice - his 'odano'; he says 'pakkodano': my rice is cooked. The Buddha on the other hand says 'akkodhano': 'there is no more wrath in me. I am one in whom there is no more wrath.' It's as though Dhaniya is concerned with the material things. The Buddha is, as it were, concerned with the spiritual things. So, the contradiction begins. Dhaniya says 'I've drawn the milk'; the Buddha says 'I have fertile mind.' This is rather interesting. Let's just refer to the text here. The Buddha says 'Akkodhano vigatakhilo'. It's this phrase, or this word in fact that Hare translates as 'I have fertile mind.' So, let's get into that because that is a bit interesting. Dhaniya is concerned with his rice and with his milk; the Buddha is concerned with his own state of mind. First of all with his own freedom from hatred, but then he uses this interesting term 'vigatakhilo'. 'Vigata' means 'gone away', 'khilo' is a word which means, well it's got a double meaning. It means in the first place 'wasteland'. So 'khelo' is, or 'khela' is the wasteland, the uncultivated land but it also means the infertile land, in a sense, the bad land. So, it's got this double meaning. It can be wasteland simply in the sense of land that is not been cultivated, or it can be wasteland in a sense of land that is very difficult to cultivate, that does not repay your effort very much. So it suggests a sort of barren land. So waste, infertile, barren land, this is what the word means essentially. That's the primary meaning.

The secondary meaning is as applied to the mind. This term 'khela' as applied figuratively or metaphorically to the mind is quite common in Pali literature. It's the barren mind, the infertile mind, the waste mind. The mind that is not producing anything, the desert mind, the wasteland type of mind, the mind which is itself a sort of wasteland. It's a very strong term, very strong word. So, the Buddha says 'vigatakhilo' - that state of waste and barrenness and infertility has gone away. Dhaniya is concerned only with getting milk from his cows. The Buddha is concerned with the state of his own mind, getting rid of the state of barrenness, making it fertile, getting rid of the state of waste and making it productive. So, you see the contrast, and you see this interesting term.

___: What did you say 'akkodhano' meant?

S: Freedom from wrath. It's 'Kodha' or 'Krodha', it's AKKODHANO - (Bhante spells it) - 'Akkodhano - one free from anger. It's the Sanskrit 'kroda'. And 'VIGATAKHILO': the one who has banished - that is from the mind, or from whose mind has gone away, the state of barrenness. That is why Hare translates it as 'I have a fertile mind.' That is not literally correct, it's 'I am one from whom barrenness has gone away', that is the literal translation. (Pause.) It's quite an interesting term. May be we could spend a little bit of time on this, this conception of the waste or barren mind, and the fertile or productive mind because the Buddha is quite clearly envisaging the whole spiritual life in these terms. You are either mentally barren, mentally infertile, mentally unproductive, or you are mentally rich and fruitful and productive. [51] So, it's quite an interesting way of looking at the spiritual life. And though this term does occur quite a bit in the Pali texts not much is made of it in later Theravadin Buddhism, based on these Pali scriptures themselves.

___: What is the term for restlessness?

S: 'VIGATAKHILO' VIGATAKHILO (Bhante spells it) with a dash over the 'i' because it's long like the and 'e', 'khilo.

: And how is it when that 'restlessness' has gone?

S: This is the state of one from whom the waste, or barren state, has gone. Khilo is the waste or barren state itself. 'Vigata' is 'gone away from', separated from. So the Buddha is one who has brought his mind to a state of fruitfulness and productiveness. It's no longer a waste or barren mind. Just as Dhaniya might have worked hard upon his land, and made it rich and fruitful, and productive at least of grass for his cows, in the same way the Buddha has worked on his own mind and now has a fertile mind, a rich and fruitful and productive mind - spiritually productive. (Pause.) So 'I foiled my wrath, I've fertile mind.' Thus spake the Master in reply. In other words he is concerned with spiritual cultivation, not with material cultivation. 'I dwell one night beside Mahi.' He is not just talking about the river. Literally of course, yes, he is going to spend only one night there because he is a wanderer. He is going from place to place. He is not settled there as Dhaniya is. In a way, the worldly person is the settled person. The spiritual person is the one who passes on, not necessarily only literally, but metaphorically. He is only spending one night. May be sheltering in an out-building, that was the usual sort of thing. But also if you take 'Mahi' in the sense of 'the world', it's as though he says 'we think we are here for a long time, but it's just really like one night'. We are as it were just one night in this world, it's a very short sojourn, we don't stay here very long. We're just pilgrims, as it were, passing. Then, he says: 'opened my hut' - I am not trying to cover up anything, my hut is completely open. Just as the Buddha says in the Udana. (pause.) 'And cooled down my fire' - Now look at the word for cooled down, that is quite interesting. It's 'NIBBUTO GINI'. 'Nibbuto' which is the same word as 'nibbana' - it's 'blown out', extinct'. So it suggests what we now speak of in terms of the attainment of Nirvana. The fire has gone out. This is a very ancient Buddhist idiom for the attainment of Enlightenment - the fire of passion has gone out. So, when the Buddha says 'My hut is open', 'my fire is extinct', he suggests that he is enlightened. All the passions, all the defilements are exhausted. There is no more fuel. The oil has all been consumed, and the flame of craving and so on, has gone out. (Pause.)

So you see the apposition - not to say the opposition - between two ideals, stated in these two verses - that of Dhaniya, and that of the Buddha. (Pause.) So the Buddha is contradicting Dhaniya, or at least challenging Dhaniya, at every point.

Dhaniya is rejoicing in his material cultivation; the Buddha is rejoicing in his mental and spiritual cultivation. Dhaniya thinks he is there to stay as it were - the Buddha knows he is only there for a short while. Dhaniya rejoices that he has shut everything out - the Buddha rejoices that he is open to everything. [52] Dhaniya rejoices that the fire is burning, perhaps rejoicing in a way that the fire of craving is still burning. But the Buddha is rejoicing because it's extinct. Dhaniya does not care even if it rains; the Buddha does not care whatever changes there may be in the conditioned world because he is established in the unconditioned. So, he does not care what storm may come, whether it's even the storm of death, it does not make any difference to Him. Dhaniya does not care what happens because he thinks he is safe whereas actually he isn't. The Buddha doesn't care what happens because he knows he is safe - that's the difference; or more than safe you could say.

Any query on those two contrasting verses? The rest of the sutta is going to develop along more or less the same lines. (Pause.) We also notice Dhaniya says 'I dwell with mates beside MAHI'; the Buddha just speaks of himself dwelling one night beside Mahi. He does not speak of any other person. He is still, as it were, just the individual on his own, just as in the previous (text.)

___: I suppose you could interpret 'mates' as being wife and family as well.

S: He refers in later verses to his wife and to his sons, and presumably there are people who are working for him as well. It's a little sort of extended family establishment. It might even have been a couple of dozen people all living there together. The Buddha is on his own.

Siddhiratna: I was going to say with 'roofed is my hut' and the other one 'open my hut', it's almost as if 'roofed is my hut', although it means sort of shut in, he's being sort of not aware of what the possibilities of his life are; on the other hand I wonder if you could interpret it - it could be misunderstood as 'secure am I'.

S: He thinks he is secure, yes, this is really what it amounts to. He thinks he is secure. He thinks that there is 'security' in security. But the Buddha knows there is security in insecurity. You know what Alan Watts - someone I don't usually quote - describes as the 'Wisdom of Insecurity.'

Siddhiratna: I was thinking you could almost transpose those two and still arrive at a meaning from them.

S: Yes, you could, yes, as in those same kinds of verses in the Udana. (Pause.) There is also a reminiscence in this 'open hut' of the verses in the Dhammapada attributed to the Buddha immediately after His Enlightenment where he says 'The house is broken. It means the 'house of life'. The ridge-pole split and all that kind of thing. So it can be looked at with that in mind as well. 'My hut is opened', the sort of, the structure of my life has been torn asunder as it were. It was all built up by craving, that craving has been destroyed, and so therefore the hut or the house of conditioned existence is crumbling, it's open, the roof has fallen in. So there is the false wisdom of security, the genuine wisdom of insecurity. (Pause.)

So, Dhaniya doesn't give up, he is not altogether convinced; so he goes on. 'No gnats, no gadflies here are found.' 'In rich grass meads my cattle roam. Well can they brave what storms may come.' He is still, despite the Buddha's very direct confrontation and challenge, he is quite unable to accept that, at least for the time being, so he goes on expressing his sense of complacency [53] and security. 'No gnats, no gadflies have been found.' To us that may seem a bit of an anti-climax, but not if you lived in India. If you find a place which is not only full of grass, but also where there are no gnats and gadflies, you are very fortunate. I remember when we were in New Zealand just a year ago, it was the one fault that could be found in New Zealand, so many insects. The one inconvenience on that beautiful retreat in the country - you were stung like anything by insects; you had to smother your hands and your face and your feet and your legs with a thick strongly smelling oil to keep them away. New Zealand really does abound in these stinging insects, they can be very troublesome. And India is much the same. So if you are living in one of these country areas, especially if you are living in the midst of thick grassland which you need for your cattle, you are very likely to be troubled with flies, with gnats, gadflies and so on. So, Dhaniya is saying 'well, I am really very lucky. I am living in this beautiful spot, there is plenty of grass but there aren't any gnats, there aren't any gadflies; there is plenty of meadowland in which my cattle can roam, and they are quite able to bear whatever storm may come. He is putting up a brave front. He is as it were boasting, he is bragging of the advantages of the situation, which he is living in. And he is boasting of the quality of his possessions, his wealth, in other words, his cattle. So this is his response to the Buddha's challenge. He reiterates as it were his satisfaction and his

complacency. (Pause.) So what does the Buddha say? The Buddha does not give up either. The Buddha says: 'Well fashioned was the bonded raft.' Thus spake the Master in reply. 'But none is the need of raft for Him, crossed and yon-fared, the floodtide ridden.' There is an alternative translation by Chalmers, which is a bit clearer perhaps. 'I framed a well-wrought raft which bore me over the flood. I need no further rafts.' Just those three lines. So we know what the raft is, don't we?

___: The Dharma.

S: The Dharma, yes. This again is reminiscent of the parable of the raft. The Buddha has made use of the means. He has got to the further shore. So having got to the further shore, he does care what happens now. Once you are enlightened, you obviously don't care what happens, the heavens may fall, it does not matter any more. The 'flood' of course is the flood of the passions - craving, anger and so on. Later on whole lists of particular floods were given, but at this particular point, those developments hadn't taken place. (pause.) We have dwelt upon it before, but this whole conception of the Dharma as a means, the Dharma as 'raft' to be ultimately abandoned, is very, very important for Buddhism because it makes clear that the whole Dharma is instrumental in function - not an end in itself. It's something to be made use of, and then cast aside. Any query on that?

___: Practically speaking there is not much point in us thinking in that way. I mean...

S: Right! Except, with regard to particular stages. There is no need to go on clinging to a stage which you already really have finished with when you ought to be going on to the next stage. We can perhaps look at it ourselves in that sort of way. Even may be with regard to particular forms of meditation that may be, having [54] had a good experience of the Mindfulness of Breathing and the Metta Bhavana, you ought to move on, not leaving them behind in the literal sense of stopping doing them, but adding something, doing something more as well.

Jinamata: I think there is a point in thinking that all the time, and people will come up and say 'Oh, I had a good meditation', sort of really indulge in having had a good meditation and clinging to it. I think that's the same kind of thing.

S: But I don't think they've reached Nirvana, not usually!

Jinamata: No! But what I am trying to say is there is a point in thinking in this way - all the time.

S: There is a point in bearing in mind, all the time, that the whole of the Dharma is instrumental. But also one has to be cautious if one is a beginner not, as it were, taking a sort of cavalier attitude towards the Dharma, thinking it is only after all something to be tossed aside eventually. You know it has to be something deeply sincere. Very often people speak very lightly of the Dharma as 'raft' before they have stepped on to it. So amongst beginners especially that attitude must not be encouraged.

___: It's more like one should be questioning all the time (what the Dharma is doing?)

S: Yes. 'What is this doing for me? Am I really moving forward? Is it a raft? Have I mistaken

a bit of the jetty for the raft? Am I in fact just sitting down on the shore?' (Laughter.) 'Am I still tied to the shore? Am I not yet cut loose?' But, as I said, this whole idea of the Dharma being a raft is historically and spiritually very, very important for Buddhism.

___: So the point of the Buddha's reply to Dhaniya was that he need not bother about storms or worry about storms because he has crossed from samsara to nirvana.

S: Yes. There is also the point because there is a contrast in each pair of verses that Dhaniya is trying as it were to settle down still more firmly where he is. The Buddha has challenged him. The Buddha has contradicted him. But what is his response, what is his reaction? He settles down all the more firmly where he is. He says: 'Well, here I am.' It's a beautiful piece of countryside. There are no gnats, there are no flies, there is beautiful grass. My cattle can roam about freely, they have nothing to fear from the rain. He is all settled down.

___: He's defending his position.

S: He is defending his position yes. But the Buddha is saying he has crossed over, which is the exact opposite of settling down. Dhaniya is settling down all the more firmly on this shore whereas the Buddha is saying he has crossed over to the other shore. Dhaniya is saying as it were: 'Thank you. I am all right where I am.' So whether the Buddha again returns to the attack and speaks in terms of 'crossing over', by means of a raft which is a means to an end. So in a way, Dhaniya and the Buddha are opposite extremes. Dhaniya is not making use of the raft; the Buddha does not need to make use of any raft.

[55]

S: So you could say that there are three kinds of person. The person who has settled down as firmly as he can on this shore and does not want to stir; he is stuck, he is in a rut. Dhaniya was in a sort of rut. Then there is the person who is in process of crossing over, who is actually on the raft, paddling with hands and feet, or possibly putting up a little sail. That's the second kind of person. And then there is the third kind of person who has actually crossed over, who has left the raft behind and does not need the raft any more. (pause.)

All right, let's go on. 'Obedient is my wife, no trull.' Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya. 'Long hath she been a loving mate, no rumoured wrong I hear of her. So if thou wish, rain Deva, rain.' What does 'trull' mean? (Laughter.) Not a 'troll', is it?

Marichi: Is it a trollop?

S: I don't know whether it's connected with a trollop. Just a minute, the translation is not quite right really. It's more like, the text actually mentions what may be taken as her proper name: 'Gopi'. 'Gopi' is the cowgirl. You have all heard of the gopis associated with Krishna of course. So 'Gopi mama assava alola'. He is saying as it were there is my 'gopi'. 'Asava' is - well it's not exactly obedient, it's more like disciplined, well behaved. And 'alola' means 'not restless'; firm, steady, reliable. I don't know where he got 'no trull' not really very satisfactory. Chalmers comes nearer, he says: 'A staunch and loyal dame have I'. But even 'dame' is perhaps not - yes 'gopi' 'gopi mama' 'mama' is 'my' 'my gopi', well behaved, steady, reliable - a good kind of housewife, obviously. 'Digharattam samvasiya manapa'. '-We've dwelled together many a night.' In Pali the idiom is not 'many a long day' but 'many a long night.' 'Digharatto', a long night. We've dwelt together satisfactorily for many a long night. 'No rumoured wrong I hear of her. So if thou wish, rain Deva, rain.' So, Dhaniya is still affirming

his position. He thinks he's got the edge over the Buddha. Here is this penniless mendicant. He just turned up in the evening, in his yellow robe and his begging bowl. He's got nothing. He does not have (even) a single cow. So Dhaniya's tendency is always to feel that he is in a superior position. He's boasted about his cows, he's boasted about his house, and he has boasted about his fire. And the Buddha of course challenged all that. So, Dhaniya still returns to the attack. Not only this fellow has got no cows, he's not even got a wife. He is just on his own in the world as it were. And in orthodox Hindu society, I mean, not to have a wife was practically not to exist. So he produces almost his trump card. 'I have got a wife.' Not only a wife, she is a good wife - she is well-disciplined, she is very steady, she is very reliable. 'We've lived together a long time. According to the commentary he is quite an elderly man, but the text doesn't actually say anything about that. And 'I hear no evil of her' - she has a good reputation, she is a very moral sort of woman. So he is boasting about his wife and triumphing in the fact that he's got a wife of this kind. So, what does the Buddha say? The Buddha returns the attack and he says 'Obedient is my mind and freed'. Thus spake the Master in reply. 'Long hath it been well quickened, tamed. No ill is found or known in me.' So the Buddha says 'All right, I too have got a wife, my wife is my own mind.' I mean you're boasting about your well-disciplined wife, what about my well-disciplined mind - that's even better, as it were? To have a well-disciplined mind is even better than having a well-disciplined [56] and loyal wife. So that is the Buddha's reply to that.

There are one or two interesting terms here. 'Long has it been well-quickened.' 'Well-quickened' does not really represent the force of the original word, which is 'paribhavitam'. 'Parabhavitam' can be regarded as meaning 'well-developed' though that is not the literal meaning. The literal meaning does not seem very clearly connected with the metaphorical meaning. The literal meaning is more like 'pervaded'. But the actual meaning is more like 'developed' - developed all round; even encompassed, even protected - 'parabhavitam'. If we say a well-developed mind, that will give more or less the meaning as 'sudantam' - well-controlled.

___: What word do they use for 'mind'?

S: 'Cittam'. Do you think this is at all significant or has any sort of psychological basis that the mind is compared to the wife, or contrasted with the wife?

___: It seems like the Christian idea of soul as being the (?)

S: It's occurred to me that it's a bit like Blake's emanation.

___: What is Blake's emanation?

S: Come on Luvah. How would you describe or define the emanation? Briefly, just a few words, sentences.

Luvah: A female counterpart of the male in the symbolism of the male-female. So it's the projection, it's everything that a man projects or creates.

S: Not just a projection in the modern psychological sense, it's also production. Your emanation is all the things that you create. If you are a poet, your poems also are the embodiments of your emanations as it were.

___: (?)

S: For instance if you are a poet and you produce so many poems, the poems are as it were also your emanation, your emanation actually embodied in objective works. Also your ideas, your ideals, your dreams, your aspirations, these are also your emanations.

___: I wonder if that's why 'well-quickened' is used here. I mean something that has come very much in mind ...

S: Yes, it's well - though it's actually - the original does not mean 'well-quickened' in that sense. Quick suggests life that is not in the Pali word. The Pali word means much more like 'developed', though it is the same order of thought one could say.

Jinamata: That is the same kind of idea, like the 'fertile mind', something that is ...

S: It is, yes indeed.

___: It reminds one of the Muse.

S: The 'Muse', yes, that is true.

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___: It's very much that contrast, very much gives the idea of integration.

S: Right! It's as though in the case of the worldly person there is the wife as a separate personality, a separate individual, a separate being. But in the case of the enlightened person, the place of the wife is taken by the illuminated mind itself; the controlled and developed mind itself. You don't need an outside wife because you have your own 'wife' as it were within.

And this is what in Tantric symbolism the Dakini symbolizes. Sometimes the so-called sexual symbolism of the Tantra can be misunderstood because you see, or you think you see, two figures. But they are not two figures. Well, they are two figures in art, but spiritually they are one being. There is one enlightened individual with those two aspects of himself in perfect fusion and harmony.

Jinamata: So, that's a sort of inspiration and also emotional energy?

S: Yes. You actually experience that in the fullest possible way, at the highest possible level. So what Dhaniya is looking for outside, in the form of a wife, the Buddha has realized within Himself, in the form of his own mind. The emanation is not split off from the man. The emanation is an integral part of the man himself and the fully developed emanation at that. In Blake's symbolism, when the emanation splits off - well, that is disastrous. That's an aspect of the fall and you are looking for your emanation in someone or as someone outside yourself, which only prolongs the split.

So this juxtaposition in these two verses of wife and mind is very significant. 'Mind', here 'Citta', is not mind in the rather mental, Western sense. 'Citta' is also translated as 'heart', is more like the 'psyche' in the Jungian sense. And 'psyche' is of course as a word feminine in

gender. (Pause.)

So you could say the first verses are very general. You get the general contrast, or the contrast in very general terms between Dhaniya's life, or state, and the Buddha's. Or you could even say it's sort of an 'economic' contrast between the two, the wealthy herdsman, the poor mendicant. Then of course there is the ecological contrast - Dhaniya in the midst of his meadows, and the Buddha crossing over the river. And then there is the psychological contrast - Dhaniya with a wife, and the Buddha with His own mind. And then of course there is another contrast in the next two verses - you could say a 'social' one.

So, what does Dhaniya say? 'By earnings I support myself.' Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya. 'Hale sons and I together dwell; no rumoured wrong I hear of them.' So Dhaniya is still thinking that he has got the edge over the Buddha. He is saying: well you are a mendicant, you are a bhikkhu, you are going from place to place, you are dependent on alms, you are dependent on other people, but I support myself by my own earnings, and I have got hale sons, and I dwell together with them. They are roundabout me. I hear no evil of them either. So Dhaniya is rejoicing in the fact that he is his own master and he has got all these sons and that they are all living together happily, and they are good sons as well. (pause.) What does the Buddha say in reply to that? 'Servant to none whate'er am I.' Yes. I am not one who serves another. I am not dependent for my livelihood on another. 'I fare the world with wages won!' It's a paradox; I don't serve anybody but I've got my wages. What do you think that means? In a sense it means he has done with all that. Or you can take the wage as the wage of Nirvana. He has got [58] the final wage, which ends all wages.

___: The golden hand-shake.'

S: The golden handshake - the diamond handshake. (Pause.) So, you see the point-by-point contrast with Dhaniya's attitude. He congratulates himself on the fact that he supports himself but the Buddha supports Himself in a far higher sense. He has earned wages even, in a far higher sense than Dhaniya. (Pause.) But Dhaniya seems to think that he has won the argument because he says again: 'See here are goodly cows and calves.' Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya. 'And here are breeders great with calf' and 'here the bull Lord of the herd.' So, once again he is taking great satisfaction in all his possessions and he thinks that because he has all these possessions, and the Buddha has nothing, therefore he is in a way better off than the Buddha.

Sagaramati: He also seems to suggest he is secure for the future as well.

S: Yes, he doesn't seem to think really about the future; he takes it for granted; he is quite secure and safe. So the Buddha, as it were, finishes with a metaphor now. He doesn't say 'well I've also got a herd of cows, but they are spiritual cows:' etc, etc. There is a flat denial. The Buddha says: 'No goodly cows and calves are here.' Thus spake the Master in reply. 'Here are no breeders great with calf; here is no bull lord of the herd.' So why do you think the Buddha is now speaking in this way?

___: To try and make more impact on Dhaniya.

S: More impact, and even more forcible negation. Dhaniya starts by saying; 'well I've got something' and the Buddha says 'I've got something too, only it's spiritual.' But now the

Buddha is saying: 'No, I haven't got anything at all. I possess nothing at all.'

Marichi: And it does show Dhaniya the very different order of things they are taking about.

S: Yes. The way the Buddha is speaking apparently also has it's own impact because from Dhaniya's point of view the Buddha does not seem to be like a man who does not have anything. From Dhaniya's point of view he should be all miserable and wretched, and woe-begone. But he isn't, he is very happy, very pleased with Himself even though he says he's got nothing at all. This ties up with something we talked about on one of the previous study retreats - that is I think it was the Udana - the 'Akincanna', 'the man who has nothing; the man of nought' as Woodward translates it. Do you remember anyone? This was an early term for the 'Arahant.' 'Akincanna': 'the man who has nothing; the man of nought.' The man who owns nothing, possesses nothing. So, it's much the same sort of idea here. The Buddha is saying 'I own absolutely nothing; I am a poor man' in may be the original Franciscan sort of sense. Complete poverty - which is not just material poverty, but even the psychological and spiritual poverty in the sense of non-appropriation. No sense of ownership - because there is no 'I' there can't be any 'mine'. So here the Buddha is trying almost forcibly to break down Dhaniya's way of thinking - Dhaniya is building up, the Buddha is breaking down. [59] Dhaniya is saying what he has got and rejoicing in that; the Buddha is saying what he has not got, and is rejoicing in that. Dhaniya is rejoicing as it were, in the fact that he has got everything as he thinks; the Buddha is rejoicing in the fact that he has got nothing. Dhaniya is rejoicing in the fact that he is 'a man of something'; the Buddha is rejoicing in the fact that he is a man of nothing' - a man of nought. So, it's a conflict between 'ought' and 'nought' - something and nothing. The prosperous man Dhaniya, the rich man Dhaniya, and the poor man, or the 'little poor man' as the Franciscans said, the 'poperello'. So it's quite a confrontation between worldly values and spiritual values. (Pause.)

Then what does Dhaniya say? He does not give up. 'The stakes are sunk unshakeable.' Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya. 'The rush-made cords are woven new. Truly no cows can break out now'.

What sort of attitude do you feel this reflects in very general terms?

___: Defensive.

S: Not only defensive, it's even more. Binding everything, tying it down so that it can't get away. Security!

___: Clinging.

S: Clinging, fastening. Well this is a very common human attitude.

___: With ideas too.

S: With ideas too. You try to contain everything, to tie everything down, to tie everything up, to make it into a neat little package. You try to do this with every aspect of your life. I mean there is the colloquial expression: 'I have got it tied up' or 'I have got it sown up' - it's under control. 'I have got it taped.' I mean these expressions are very revealing! Scotch-taped! (Pause.)

But we do this very, very much, this tying down, this binding, this making sure of something, or, of someone. And perhaps we do it most of all (this is, as it were, off the cuff - I've not thought it over but it occurs to me), perhaps we do it most of all with one, ideas and, two with people. We want to tie down ideas; we want to be quite sure of everything. We want to know everything for certain - have it all neatly fitting together - a sort of ideological jigsaw puzzle. And the little bits making a very neat tidy picture. We don't like untidiness, any gaps in our thinking, any holes in our ideology.

Sagaramati: I don't see that as being a very bad attitude.

___: It's the same sort of thing if one is like that with one's ideas - it's insecurity undermined. You worked something out and you want it to be like that, you don't want it to change. And in fact that's just being stuck, clinging to ideas.

S: Ah, but there is a distinction between seeing a harmony, and trying to impose a system, yes? (Hums ... of acknowledgement.)

There is a harmony, yes, and you can see that harmony and want to see that harmony, and that harmony maybe reflected in a way, in a system. But to try to have a system for the sake of having a system, or rather for the sake of the security that the system gives you, that is quite another matter.

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But surely there is a harmony which can be discovered. It's a bit like what somebody said - I've quoted this before I am sure - about Herbert Spencer, the philosopher, that his idea of a tragedy was 'a beautiful theory killed by a fact.' It's rather like that. So when you want a system, when you are seeking psychological security from a system, you tend to ignore anything that does not fit in. Or you may even get quite angry and defensive over something that doesn't quite fit in, whereas you think it destroys the system, and that destroys your security, and in that way you can become blind to the real harmony that is there. So, it's a question of being open to the genuine harmony and wholeness of things rather than trying to impose a very limited and partial harmony and wholeness.

Sagaramati: How does that fit in with things like efficiency? I mean, I feel, there is a danger of a big, you know, people excusing something (?) that's chaos by saying 'I am not going to be tied down', and using not being tied down to not committing themselves. I just feel that these are two extremes.

S: Well, it's like, as I said, the man who settles down on this shore and the man who has crossed over. And sometimes the two can seem very, very superficially somewhat the same. So, the person who refuses to commit himself is not the 'free' person. He is less free than the person who does commit himself. He is just himself a chaos, he is not integrated, that's why he can't commit (himself).

: It's a negative freedom, it's an idea of freedom but it's not real, is it? You hear people saying: 'I want to be free', meaning...

S: meaning: 'I don't want to be free!'

: Yes, in a way.

S: But, this sort of thing about inefficiency is quite common nowadays, isn't it, this reactive sort of non-efficiency?

Jinamata: I think it's a reaction to too much system these days. I don't think it's freedom. I think there are people like that who experience too much system, and are just reacting to it.

S: This is what one is usually told, but is it in fact the case? People surely object to being much less tied down than they used to be. Look how tied down the ordinary working people, especially young people, even children, were in the last century. You know, getting up at five o'clock every morning and going off to work in the factory until eight o'clock or nine o'clock at night.

: I think you can say that they are still tied down in some senses although you have a superficial view of freedom. I mean it's a sort of freedom through being tied to wanting a new car, or to appear in high fashion or something like that.

S: But what is tying you is within your own mind.

: Oh yes, sure.

Marichi: But there are more choices on a particular level - or an easier level...

Sagaramati: But it does not mean to say you are any freer just because you've got more choices.

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___: No, but it gives you more choices and you can be more confused by them, more inefficient.

S: I think there is a great danger of people wanting to keep all their options open. And they want to keep their options open so long, on the pretext of preserving their freedom that they never actually make any choice, and therefore they never really gain anything.

Padmaraja: Is that based on a kind of greed because you want everything, you end up getting nothing?

___: Or fear?

S: It is based on greed to the extent that you'd like to keep all the options open so that you can enjoy all those options. But also fear, you don't want to miss out on anything. If you commit yourself to something, you are excluding the other possibilities and you are afraid of doing that.

___: So one could say basically that somebody ... in that state would be like their energies are dispersed.

S: Suppose you take an example. Take the example of marriage. Supposing there are five -

supposing you are a man that is, we'll do it that way round - supposing you are a man and there are five attractive girls that you can marry, when you can marry any one of them that is. Supposing you want to keep all your options open, what does that mean? You never marry any of them. But you remain free to marry any of them. But actually you never marry any of them. In the end you really lose out. You could argue that if you marry one, you lose the other four. But is that really the right way of looking at it? Where people are concerned do you really lose the other four by simply marrying one? You cannot really make that sort of quantitative comparison. You can't think of those things in those sort of quantitative terms because, in a sense, if you have got one, you've got all. But you don't think that; you think that if you've got one, you can't have the others. But you want to have them all because of your greed; you are afraid of losing them all. So you go on keeping all your options open. And this is what people do with spiritual paths and religions too. 'Oh, I don't want to tie myself down, you know.' I don't want to commit myself because they think that if they commit themselves they will lose out. Just as the man who might think 'Well if I marry one of those girls, well, I'll miss out on the other four.' (We are not considering polygamy seriously at this stage, in the context of this argument.) So, someone might think 'Well, why should I commit myself to Buddhism, I am missing out on Christianity) Islam, Taoism, Rosicrucianism - think what I am missing out on! I am missing out on more than I am gaining. So, you know, I'd better not commit myself to anything. So I'll keep all my options open, then I am free, then I gain much more. But actually of course you don't gain an thing. So this keeping of your options open doesn't involve freedom at all. Freedom is really in commitment.

Padmapani: ... a bit like a jack-of-all trades and master of none.

S: A bit like that, yes. (Pause.) So you often find people considering various alternatives and thinking of them in this sort of way, if you [62] do one you can't do the others, and the greed consists in wanting to have all of them at once, even though they are actually incompatible and that is impossible. You would like to go to India, but you'd also like to go to America. But you have only got a month in which to do it, and you can't do both. And you feel so frustrated by not being able to do both that you don't do either. But it's your greed that has made you think in those terms. If you can't do everything, you don't want to do anything. But you can't do everything. You don't need to do everything. (Pause.) Anyway, how did we get to that point? It's the security and insecurity, and trying to tie things down. The really basic thing is the insistence on system and order, and so on, for the sake of security not for the sake of truth.

___: ... viewed as an end in itself almost.

S: There is also the question of power that also comes in, doesn't it?

___: You mean control over' things...?

S: 'Control over', power in that sense, yes. You want power, so that you can control. You want control so that you can tie down. You want to tie down so that you can be safe and secure. Well usually why does one want power over other people? What do you really get out of it? You are so tied down by looking after other people and controlling them, you can't do anything; you are not free to do anything. Like the warden in a prison, it's constant supervision; you've not time for your own life. You are so busy controlling other people. Theoretically so that you can do what you want to do, but if you are controlling other people,

you've no time to do anything you want to do. That's the great paradox of it, you stop controlling other people, you are free. I mentioned tying down ideas, also, tying down people. This is the sort of thing which is so often in human relationships - people want to tie down other people, to be sure of them - to get guarantees and pledges, and all that sort of thing. And promises, and undertakings, in writing, signed, sealed and delivered.

___: And there is also things like life insurance.

S: Life insurance, love insurance!

Lokamitra: It seems to be coming to a head here; it slowly comes to a head.

S: It does indeed, in weight. (Laughter.)

Lokamitra: ... security ... it's getting more and more desperate.

S: It does rather seem like that, as though it's building up on Dhaniya's side and the Buddha is just not giving way as it were. He is affirming as strongly as he can. It's rather like that little story I sometimes tell of the 20th blow, that broke, that split the boulder. The previous 19 didn't seem to be producing any effect, but they must have been producing an effect. So, it's just like that. The Buddha is delivering these mighty blows on the great boulder of Dhaniya's complacency, and it's as though verse by verse there is no effect produced. But shortly there is going to be a mighty split, and the two halves of the boulder are just going to roll apart.

(Pause.) We can say in a way there are three things in which we place our security, and that therefore we try to tie up: in things, in ideas, and in people. 'Things' means material possessions, belongings, property, money, wealth, art collections, and so on. But then, ideas, dogmas, [63] theologies, ideologies, systems, creeds, confessions. And then people. Father, mother, friends, husband, wife, boyfriend, girlfriend, son, daughter, dog, cat!

___: Reputation.

S: Reputation, yes.

___: Moral support for one's opinion.

Sagaramati: I wonder what the difference is between say, doubt, and insecurity?

S: Doubt? Doubt in what sense?

Sagaramati: In any of these three things. Say you doubt, say you are following an idea but some other idea you had, and you sort of follow that. And there is a point where the two just can't fit. There seems to be a dichotomy between them. So you doubt both the ideas in a sense because ... Why does insecurity come in? I mean is doubt actually different from insecurity?

S: I would say that insecurity comes in as a result of doubt, when you are not looking for truth, but you are looking for security. Well, you can doubt everything in a way but still feel quite secure in yourself in a way. I say 'in a way' because you only feel a real genuine security when you are enlightened. But you can feel ordinary human security even though you may be intellectually and spiritually full of doubts. In Zen Buddhism, they encourage doubt in this

sort of spiritual sense. They speak in terms of the 'Great Doubt', when you sort of doubt everything, but that doubt far from undermining your security in a way gives you greater security - it strips away all the false supports. You doubt everything. You doubt even your doubt: You are not even sure of that. You can't be sure whether it's a genuine doubt, or whether it's a justified doubt. That what you are doubting is doubt-worthy. You may be mistaken, you doubt that, but you feel quite happy and secure nonetheless because your security is not any longer in any idea or intellectual formulation - someone has said once that 'the disinterested search for truth is about the rarest thing in the world.' We usually go in search of security, through ideas or from ideas. Just as in the field of human relations, 'disinterested love' is the rarest thing in the world. We usually go in search of security of one kind or another. Psychological security, emotional security, warmth, comfort, not love, not in the sense of giving love, not disinterested love. We all know that if some so-called relationship breaks up - whether it's inside marriage or outside marriage - how distressed people feel. They feel as though their whole life has come to an end, has become meaningless. They feel absolutely terrible. Why is this? There is this tremendous emotional investment, and the tremendous security that was in that relationship for them. (Pause.) So, we must be very careful about our attitude towards things, ideas, people. Certainly make use of things, certainly entertain ideas, certainly have relationships with people. I mean I am using the word relationship in the quite neutral sense. But don't use these things as bases for security, which at the same time doesn't mean an attitude of irresponsibility or cynicism.

Jinamata: It is sometimes very difficult to get that across to people, that it doesn't mean that, irresponsibility and cynicism, because they haven't experienced anything like that at all.

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S: Non-possessive warmth, it's sometimes called.

Right, let's just refresh our memories as to what Dhaniya said.

'The stakes are sunk, unshakeable.'
Thus spake the herdsman Dhaniya.
'The rush-made cords are woven new.
Truly no calves can break out now.
So if thou wish, rain deva, rain.'

He's tied everything down, he's got everything under control. It's secure, it's fast, but what does the Buddha say? He says:

'As bull bursts his bonds,
thus did the Master then declare.
As tusker rends his rotten bonds,
I go no more to bed of womb.
So if thou wish, rain deva, rain.'

The Buddha compares Himself to a great bull: 'As bursts asunder his bonds.' And then, he compares Himself to a tusker, an elephant that rends his rotten bonds. First you notice there is the domestic animal that bursts free, or domesticated animal that bursts free, and then to the virtually wild animal, first to the bull, then to the tusker.

: That's quite interesting because bulls and large domestic animals generally are only kept in fields psychologically, they are quite capable of bursting out any time.

S: But they don't realize their own strength ...

: (Interrupting) You can keep a cow or a bull or a horse in a field with one strand of wire and it doesn't try to break out, and of course it could just flatten it easily if it made up its own mind.

S: (Ah, that's very interesting.) If it really wants to, that's quite a point, isn't it?

: Well, why do they have electrical wires then?

: Well, mainly so the cows know they are there, they just give it a touch. They are usually temporary, to guide cows on to a particular path or something like that.

S: So the Buddha is the one who has burst free - just like breaking through into Buddhahood as it were. He is the noble animal, he doesn't want to be bound, he bursts all his bonds. Therefore he is no longer reborn, he is not reborn any more, doesn't come back. (Pause.)

So then what happens?

'Then bursts a mighty cloud of rain,
flooding the hollows and the land.
Whereat the herdsman spake this thing,
hearing the storm and Deva roar.'

So at that point the rains come down, the rains came. What do you think the significance of that is - dramatically speaking or symbolically speaking?

Dhammadinna: That Dhaniya is now open to the influence of the Buddha.

S: It's the bursting forth of all his energies as it were. So it's a bit like the storm of rain after the Buddha's Enlightenment when Mucalinda spread his hood. Someone, a critic, once wrote something about the significance of storms in Shakespeare. Do you remember anything about that Luvah?

Luvah: Yes, Wilson Knight.

S: In Macbeth, you know, the Tempest, and of course in King Lear - this release of pent-up energy. So, it's as though Dhaniya has been saying 'No', 'No' - refusing to accept what the Buddha says, and the [64] Buddha has been sort of hammering, but every time the Buddha hammers, there is a response from Dhaniya which Dhaniya himself suppresses, he tries to maintain his point of view. But all the time the energy is accumulating which is going to enable him to burst through, and that perhaps is symbolized or reflected in the great cloud burst 'which floods the hollows and the land'.

: (It's interesting) that in Shakespeare it's seen also as a crossing over; something you go through and come out on the other side. In the later plays, the tempest becomes an earlier and

earlier part of the play - happens at the very beginning. It's a bit like crossing over, the raft.

S: There is a storm in Hamlet.

: There is a storm in most of the plays and in most of the tragedies ..

S: In Othello.

: And the last plays, always a storm there.

S: It's a clearing of the air, also.

Dhammadinna: It can't be just an ordinary storm, it's a very powerful storm, isn't it?

: You don't get a thunderstorm anyway until there is a big build-up of pressure.

: And you really feel that and you feel (?)

S: It's like a release. (Pause.) So it comes here very dramatically. So what does Dhaniya say?

'Oh gain indeed! No small gain this.
We who have seen the Master here,
unto thy refuge seer we go.
Be thou our teacher, mighty Sage.'

Let's look at the Pali here. 'Labha vata': gain. 'Saranam tam upema cakkhuma'; the word which is translated by Hare as 'seer' is 'cakkhuma': the one possessing the eye; it's the 'eyed': E-Y-E-D. - the possessor of the eye, in other words, the one who sees; the one who truly sees, the seer. One who has seen the truth, seen Reality, in other words, the Buddha. 'Sattha no hohi tuvam mahamuni.' Not 'mighty sage', 'great sage' - literally: 'Maha Muni'. Be our teacher, or please be our teacher. So you notice that Dhaniya responds by Going for Refuge. Obviously this is very, very important. He goes for Refuge to the Buddha, that's his response. When the storm comes, when there is this tremendous release of energy, when he allows himself to respond to what the Buddha says, when he accepts Him, when he commits himself to what the Buddha represents, he goes for Refuge. (Pause.)

So on the one hand there is this tremendous impact of the Buddha on Dhaniya, the tremendous impact of the Enlightened man on the worldly man, of the poor man in the fullest sense of the term on the rich man. And the pressure sort of builds up until there is an explosion, and the worldly man commits himself to the spiritual man. He goes for Refuge. So it's quite dramatic. (Pause.) It must have been in a way quite a terrifying experience for Dhaniya. There he was, living by the side of the river and, according to the commentary he'd lived there many years. His sons were all grown up, his wife had grown old with him, he was prosperous, well to do, enough to eat and drink, a snug homestead. He did not even have to bother [65] about the rain pouring down in the rainy season. And then at night this uninvited guest comes, this 'Artithi'(?). Do you remember about that? The Artithi, in connection with the symbolism of the seven offerings? Artithi (?) is the 'untimely One'. One who turns up not at an appointed time; who just comes. That's the guest, the 'artithi'. So the Buddha just turned up, he erupts into Dhaniya's safe, or apparently safe, prosperous and contented life. He is just

standing outside the door like a ghost in the evening, in a yellow robe and with His bowl. And Dhaniya sees Him and he thinks 'Oh, he is some beggar' you know, 'begging from place to place.' And he feels a bit superior, a bit complacent, a bit proud. So he starts boasting about his wealth and prosperity. But he finds that this mysterious stranger too can boast. He can boast better than Dhaniya. He can boast in a very terrifying sort of way that eventually makes Dhaniya's hair stand on end as it were, and overturns all Dhaniya's values. He makes Dhaniya realize that he isn't a wealthy person, he is poor, it's the Buddha who is rich. And he gradually comes to that conviction and the Buddha sort of beats down all his complacency with these great hammer blows as it were until Dhaniya simply collapses or sees the truth also and he can only go for Refuge then, start treading the same path. So it's quite dramatic and a very powerful contrast. Dhaniya puts up a very good fight, he tries very hard but he has to give in in the end. He is no match for the Buddha. (Pause.)

Then what does he say?

'Obedient, the wife
and I will fare well-farers' godly life.
Yon farers over birth and death,
enders of ill will we become.'

There is quite a bit to be said here but first we have to look at the text. 'Gopi ca ahan ca assava'. The translation says 'The wife and I' which sounds very colloquial and English.' (Laughter.) He just says 'Gopi and I', Gopi and I - he uses her name. Gopi and I, 'obedient', it's more like 'discipline', rather than obedient. Now this is important. 'Brahmacariyam Sugate caramase'. This word 'brahmacariya' is a very, very important word. It appears in, for instance, the Buddha's charge to the first sixty disciples when he sent them out. He said: Brahmacariyam pakasatha. After he said 'Preach the Dharma', he says 'Brahmacariya (?)', which means 'make shine', in other words preach, illumine - the Brahmacariya. Now what does 'Brahmacariya' mean? This is very important. We have to see first of all the word 'brahma'. 'Brahma' means literally 'sublime, noble, superior', and it pertains to higher states of consciousness, sublime states of consciousness, noble states of consciousness, in other words, states of higher consciousness - meditative states. And the 'brahmas' as mythological entities are those beings, if you like, those gods who dwell on these higher planes. You can speak subjectively of a state, objectively of a plane and in terms of individuals, of a god as it were, dwelling on that plane, or born or reborn on that plane. So 'brahma' is a term for a god of this kind. So 'cariya' means 'walking; faring, living, practising' it means all those things. So 'brahmacariya' means 'one who is walking like Brahma'. This is one way of translating. Or 'One who is dwelling in sublime states of consciousness' as in brahma vihara, or the Metta bhavana, Mudita Bhavana, Karuna bhavana, Upekkha bhavana. So, 'brahmacariya' means 'one whose life is rooted in higher states or noble states', one whose life is rooted in a meditative consciousness, one whose mind is developed highly and who is living out of that, one who lives in accordance with a sublime state of mind.

So this is what 'brahmacariya' means. So it therefore means something like the spiritual life - do you see the connection? That's why it's often translated, by translators, as the 'holy life'. But it doesn't at all convey the same connotation as the expression 'holy life' [66] in English. 'Brahmacariya' sometimes it is translated as the 'godly life' which doesn't really help very much even though you do spell 'godly' with a small 'g'. I think Chalmers translates in this way: 'Fain would my dame and I follow the Blessed One, till birth and death o'er past, we

make an end of ills. No, it does not even translate 'brahmachariya' - that's quite interesting. But the text says very clearly 'We would like to follow, to practise, the brahmachariya of the Sugata. We would like to follow, to practise the spiritual life taught by the Buddha. That state, that spiritual life which consists in dwelling in, and acting from higher states of consciousness.

So 'brahmachariya' in the Pali texts, especially the early ones, is the word for the whole spiritual life, following a spiritual path is the 'brahmachariya'. Now later on the word underwent a change though we may also say that the word 'brahmachariya' had another meaning, a lower meaning, or more applied meaning, even from the beginning, that is in the sense of celibacy. 'Brahmachariya' meant the practice of celibacy. The A-brahmachariya as a precept is abstention from non-celibacy, in other words practice of celibacy. So what is the connection between brahmachariya in the first sense, and brahmachariya in the second?

Sagaramati: Well you have to be celibate - in a meditative state of consciousness...

Marichi (?): Is it not the other way round?

S: Yes, the celibacy is the natural expression of a meditative state of consciousness because you, at that particular time, you feel happy and contented within yourself. For instance, if you are actually meditating and you are thoroughly enjoying the meditation, you won't have any sexual feelings because the meditative experience is more enjoyable, so therefore there won't be any sexual activity. But if you come out of that meditative state of consciousness, you are no longer in the meditative state of consciousness, then sexual feeling may arise. So that is the connection between the two. But even so, brahmachariya in the sense of celibacy is an application - if you like a natural application ideally - of brahmachariya in the first sense.

___: Directing one's energies towards that goal.

S: Yes. So, there is no conception, as it were, of celibacy as a penance, or as a price that has to be paid. And then the various restrictions you observe in this connection are simply avoidances of stimuli when you don't want to be stimulated in that way. It's just taking sensible, as it were, hygienic precautions. If you know that you are susceptible to flu, well you will stay away from those places where lots of germs are circulating. So if you find that you are sexually susceptible you will stay away from those situations in which your sexual susceptibilities are intensified. It's just a common sense precaution until such time as you so firmly dwell in the dhyana states that it doesn't bother you any more. So they are undertaking this - Dhaniya and Gopi, husband and wife - to follow the brahmachariya, the holy life, taught by the Buddha. And it may well be that henceforth they also - because they are living the brahmachari - may also be that they are celibate, and they live together just like brother and sister; that is also quite possible. It was also quite well known in India at that time, because it often happened that a husband and wife, when their children were grown up [67] and they had seen their grand-children, they both retired to the forest together and became hermits in the forest - brahma prashtas, (?) forest dwellers. It was quite acceptable for the husband to take his wife with him into the forest, when he entered that phase of life. But then, they ceased to have any sexual relationship and they lived together just like brother and sister, or just like friends. So presumably Dhaniya and Gopi would have been familiar with that sort of concept. So it may also be, or perhaps we can understand that they not only undertook to follow the Buddha's teaching and spiritual path, and lead a spiritual life, for they also on the spot took as

it were a vow of celibacy as a natural expression of that. And though they were husband and wife they lived together celibate: that's also possible.

When brahmacariya is applied to couples would this necessarily imply celibacy? I think there is a sutta somewhere where the Buddha talks about the duties of a husband and a wife to each other, and I am not sure whether the Buddha mentions brahmacariya there.

S: No. You are thinking of the Mangala sutta but the word 'brahmacariya' does come towards the end. But the verses of the Mangala sutta represent a gradation of the ideal. It's a sort of transition from the more household state to the more monk-like state and the brahmacariya comes in towards the end, not in connection with the verses, which specifically refer to the householders life. But whether or not Dhaniya and Gopi undertook the practice of celibacy in that literal sense, they certainly undertook, as a consequence of their Going for Refuge, the practice of the spiritual life, the following in the Buddha's footsteps until such time as they crossed over birth and death, and made an end of all suffering.

Sagaramati: Is this to say, Bhante, that celibacy naturally follows as one gets in higher meditative states of consciousness?

S: Yes. Well everybody knows that. I mean if you are in a higher state of consciousness as on a retreat, you don't bother about such things. But for most people it's up and down, up and down; sometimes you are up there, sometimes you are down there.

___: Because I mean you are not always on a retreat.

S: No, right, exactly. And you know sometimes people feel, it's as it were less disturbing to as it were, yield to the provocation than to be resisting when it's actually there in front of you all the time. One just has to see how things are, for oneself.

Sagaramati: How does homosexuality come into this?

S: It doesn't come in at all.

Sagaramati: I mean, say we have male retreats, I mean from a homosexual point of view, there must be a stimulus there.

S: Well, if there is to begin with any homosexual feeling, or susceptibility.

Dhammadinna: Well presuming there is. I mean that is what you are saying in a sense. Presuming there is a homosexual feeling, then a male retreat would be providing a stimulus.

: Ah, (then there?)

[68]

S: Right, yes it would be just the same as a mixed retreat. In that case if you did have a sufficient number of such people, then you'd have to have (roars of laughter) ... retreat. I do not know quite what kind that would be!

___: They'd have to have a 'mixed retreat', wouldn't they? (more laughter.)

S: Then you are back where you started from! So, you've come full circle in a dialectical sort of way. Yes ... (laughter.)

___: Go on a female retreat.' (More laughter.)

Dhammadinna: We don't want any poofers on our retreats:

___: You go on a men's retreat!

___: That would be terrible for me! (Laughter.)

S: You know there are gay men and gay girls on retreats together, you'd have to have them just in pairs, wouldn't you? (Further laughter.)

___: Solitary retreats.'

S: Yes!

S: But, anyway the important point, you know, in connection with the term 'brahmacariya' in general is, it's a state of mind. It is an experience of a higher mode or level of consciousness the effects of which must be manifested more and more in actual action. This is the actual of the brahmacariya. Not a discipline as it were, forcibly imposed from without.

___: That actual action in one sense would be the beginning of wanting to be celibate or celibacy?

S: You could want to be celibate, in the sense of wanting to experience higher states of consciousness as the result that you tended to be naturally celibate, or you could want to be celibate for the sake of celibacy out of say, feelings of guilt, or inadequacy, etc, etc.

___: I think I mis-phrased that there that once the higher states were entered them well as we've said before, the celibacy naturally results.

S: I think I'd be careful not to over generalize from that. At the same time I don't want to leave any loop holes, because I sometimes say that there are two kinds of sexuality. There is neurotic and non-neurotic. I would say the non-neurotic is when there is sexual activity, not because of any neurotic need for security, etc., etc, through sex or through the relationship, but just because you are young and healthy may be. But neurotic sexuality is when there is not only the actual sexual urge itself but also a craving for security, contact, warmth, and so on, through the sexual relationship or sexual activity. So it may be, in the case of some people that they do experience higher states of consciousness, dhyana states, but at the same time, at least a certain amount of sexual activity may go on, but certainly non-neurotic. But one must be very careful that one doesn't, as it were, leave a loop-hole and may be deceive oneself. The great test is, if the relationship breaks, how do you feel about it then? If your partner or lover or whatever says, well 'bye-bye, [69] I have found somebody else.' If you are going to say: 'Well, fine! That's great! See you tomorrow!' sort of thing, and be happy if you are going just going to accept it happily, well then you had no neurotic craving along with your sexual relations or activity. But if you are cut up and upset and disturbed, can't meditate for months, well, obviously there has been a strongly neurotic element there. So that's the criteria.

___: There is also the other person's feelings involved. They might be getting into some neurotic thing as well, and you might do them harm, even if you are not doing anything neurotic.

S: Sure, you must consider that too. (pause.) So, one doesn't want to sort of lay down hard and fast rules - I mean a lot depends upon temperament, physical state and so on. It may well be that some people once they get absorbed into higher states of consciousness and these states become normal, they may not feel like any kind of sexual activity at all, ever! But, others at the same time may have the same experience of the meditative states of consciousness, but their physical build may be different; they just may be more healthy, more vital. A certain amount of physical sexual activity may still continue. But certainly in neither case will there be any neurotic craving. This is the really important thing, and there is not much point in giving up sex as a sort of discipline when the neurotic craving and dependence is still there, and may be finding outlets in other ways. You may be just as sort of neurotically attached to your dog or cat! But one must again emphasize, one must be very, very honest with oneself, and not indulge in any self-deception, which is so easy. 'Oh, I am free, I am not attached to that, I don't really care if it ends tomorrow.' But if it does end tomorrow, well then that's quite another story usually!

Padmapani: Presumably, if one had a relationship and one was neurotic and in a sense the relationship did brake up maybe, and one realized that, the urge or something, sexual urge or the drive, doesn't actually have to be involved in the sort of relationship again and presumably could even go into things like worldly pleasures of material nature. Would you say that was so?

S: Well, yes you can invest your emotional energy and your sense of security, completely in material things, just objects. Like the sort of house-proud woman who may be quite frigid sexually but she is completely neurotically dependent as it were on her three-piece sofa sets and all the rest of it.

___: One's new car.

S: One's new car, one's stamp collection, so many things. But for most people, the neurotic craving to a very great extent goes along with sex. So it's there, perhaps, that one has to watch it most usually. (pause.) The great criterion is whether you can remain happy whatever happens, whatever storms may come. If the storm-god does pour down, and takes away things, well if you are still happy, well then, you can be sure that there is no neurotic element in your attachment.

There is this famous story about St Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the order of Jesuits. He spent years and years, even decades, building up his great militant movement but he was quite a mystical sort of person at the same time. And there is a lot of [70] intrigue going on in the church. Some people were against his movement, trying to destroy it and at one time, it seemed as though they would persuade the Pope to wind it all up altogether. So one of his friends asked him, well suppose that did happen, how would you feel? So he said: 'five minutes of prayer and everything will be all right.' So, if you can even contemplate the destruction of your life work and think, well, after five minutes of prayer, you wouldn't be bothered at all, well there can be no real neurotic attachment to that. That is the criterion.

___: In a recent BBC interview with the Dalai Lama, three or four months ago, he gave very much this sort of air across in the interview. That they were saying: well, 'it looks as if Tibetan Buddhism is in a very sorry state', and he just said: 'well, things come, and things go.'

S: Yes, right.

___: Couldn't you in actual fact have a neurotic relationship with whatever you were building up, say in this person's case the (Dalai Lama?), and then the actual fact of it coming tumbling down, so to speak, you would have a breakthrough. In other words, it would be a sort of neurotic action but the actual fact that it had been destroyed; it would be a sort of breakthrough.

S: Well, it always happens because you lose everything in the end. To what extent you can respond healthily, and get good out of it, depends on the sort of person you basically are. Some people are, at least as far as this life is concerned, destroyed by the break-up of the relationship or their job or their career or their particular ambition - they are destroyed. But others react in a healthier way and they develop a sort of insight, they SEE what happened, and they grow because of that. But growth is not automatic, you know, when all your castles in the air come tumbling down, you may just be buried underneath and never be able to get up again, not as regards this life. You know you can meet sometimes people like that whose marriage has broken up say, and they just don't do anything after that. Or their business has failed, they've lost their money, they can't do anything. But others are more resilient. It depends on your basic health or unhealthiness in the ordinary human sense. But certainly you can have a breakthrough at such times, but that does not justify the previous attachment, one has to be very careful of that. Some people almost try to argue: well 'attachments are good because when they break up, you get real insight!' (Laughter.) Be very careful of that kind of thought. I think probably for the average Westerner, trying to follow a spiritual path, this whole question of sex and so on, is one of the most touchy of all. Because you have to be very careful that people don't fall victim to current miccha-ditthis, at the same time don't encourage feelings of guilt that in the past have so often gone along with this particular thing. One has to follow a middle path which is very, very difficult. (Pause.) Anyway, at this point Mara intervenes. Mara says:

'Whoso hath sons, delights in sons.'

Thus Mara spake, the evil one.

'The cowherd too delights in kine,

affections are delight to man,

the affectionless have no delight.'

So what do you think this intervention of Mara represents? What do you think he is doing? What is his function here? So, if you like, his dramatic purpose.

___: Second thoughts.

[71]

S: No, I see if anything, the opposite: first thoughts.

___: Being back where they were in the first place, inviting ...

S: In a sense, but, even more than that. It's as though Mara represents Dhaniya's underlying attitude, in its archetypal basic form, and puts it very, very clearly. If you like, putting it in Blakean terms, Mara represents the state, Dhaniya the man in the state. Do you see what I mean? Because what does Mara say? He expresses what was Dhaniya's underlying philosophy but which Dhaniya himself never explicitly stated. 'Whoso hath sons, delights in sons.' Happiness means having things which make you happy. This is what Mara is saying, that was Dhaniya's underlying attitude. If you want to be happy, you must have the things that make you happy: 'Whoso hath sons, delights in sons.' If you've got sons, then you can be happy because you've got the sons, you delight in them. 'The cowherd too delights in kine.' If you've got cows, you can rejoice in those cows. It's the possession of cows that make you happy. 'Affection is a delight to man.' The term is 'upadhi' which means 'a basis', but metaphorically, affections. Things that you cling on to and enjoy are delight to man. And then, the corollary: 'The affectionless hath no delight.' If you have no sons, no cows, no possessions, no wealth, you can't be happy. That was the underlying attitude of Dhaniya. But now he has gone for Refuge, now he is following the spiritual path, it's as though his underlying attitude is revealed. And Mara speaks directly, the 'state' speaks directly, and brings out his philosophy, his false philosophy quite fully and clearly.

___: It's what that philosophy is saying - the false one is - that if things start as something external, the external stimulus has to be there, whereas the opposite attitude is that the states of mind are where things start, and Mara is bringing out the opposite attitude.

S: One could put it like that, yes. That the happy state of mind depends upon having in front of you, having the possession of objects which give you the happy states of mind.

___: One tends to think that if one likes something, it's that object which has to be there, whereas in fact it starts in one's mind. And the same for hate, one tends to think 'I hate such and such a person' but in fact even if that person is removed, one still hates. And Mara is sort of saying that the false philosophy is the person that matters.

S: Or the thing that matters, the object that matters. But the Buddha expresses the opposite point of view. 'Whoso has sons, grieves over sons', because you lose them eventually, and then they are not a source of happiness, they are a source of grief. 'The cowherd too grieves over kine, affection is a sore grief to man. The affection free hath never grief.' One must not take the English translation too literally here. Sometimes, people read this as though to suggest if you don't have any metta, well then you are in a free state of mind, but that isn't the meaning at all. It's attachment.

Marichi: It does not really mean 'feeling' at all, does it?

S: No, it's 'attachment', clinging, grasping. So the Buddha is affirming (that) (when) you don't have anything then you are happy because your happiness is entirely within your mind. Conditions [72] may help the beginner, of course; you know, wholesome conditions. But in the last resort, it is your own mental state that counts. (Pause.) So, there is the archetypal wrong view, as it were, (and) the archetypal right view. (Pause.) All right, I'll just look through the whole sutta. (Pause.) Then we will see if any very general conclusions can be drawn from it. Does anyone have any sort of general comments or impressions - now that we've gone through the whole sutta? Are there any sort of residual impressions or conclusions or anything of that kind?

Padmapani: Yes, I'd like to say: DHY - is it DYANI?

___: DHANIYA.

Padmapani: Dhaniya - I mean during this text I picked up the Buddha was influencing him. But is it because he is the Buddha, he is influencing his sort of negative state, and sort of his positive state is coming through, building up until breakthrough? Or, is it that it's like a mirror reflection of himself, or is it the same thing? You know, Dhaniya is the Buddha.

S: I think one thing that we should bear in mind in this connection, Dhaniya, by all that we can tell of him, was quite a healthy sort of person. Do you see what I mean? He'd led this quite active life, with his wife, he brought up a family, he was quite successful in whatever he wanted to do. He didn't accept what the Buddha had to say, or what the Buddha represented all that easily; he put up a bit of a fight. It's as though he had a certain sort of independence of mind and character in the ordinary human sense. So one could perhaps also say that he was 'ripe' for what the Buddha had to say or what the Buddha represented. He was a sort of mature person in the ordinary human sense. But even so, it required a tremendous amount of breaking down, even the mature human being doesn't sort of just easily develop into something higher. There has to be quite a radical transformation, a turning about, or turning upside down, a conversion, a breakthrough, and this is what the Buddha provided. But one can perhaps say that there was quite a good foundation for that, inasmuch as Dhaniya was a normal healthy sort of person.

___: Is it that Dhaniya represents the worldly state of mind which - or normal state of human life - which is one where one thinks of, well, one thinks that anything other than one's state of mind matters, like external things. Whereas the Buddha is trying, represents the side which says 'well, the only thing that exists in anyway is one's state of mind.' Is that the sort of thing...?

S: I think one has to be a bit careful about saying 'the only thing that exists is one's state of mind.'

___: Well, yes I realize that I am not quite sure how to say it.

___: (Inaudible.)

S: But the Buddha also depends upon food.

___: Yes.

S: But, I mean his physical body depends upon food. But it's as though the enlightened man does not have that sort of subjective emotional involvement or investment in objective things as the worldly person has: that seems to be the real difference.

[73]

___: Going back to something we said about projection, projection in the psychological sense, or kind of projection in the sense that one projects what one doesn't like on to others, and projection in a sense ... that one - I can't quite put this in words but it is sort of at a deeper level ... I suppose that one gives anything as sort of real meaning other than one's states of

mind, something like that.

S: One could also say that Dhaniya doesn't represent anything, he is just himself. The Buddha doesn't represent anything, he is himself. It's just an encounter of these two people which is representative, it has a certain representative character. But perhaps one should not look at it too, as it were, symbolically. Dhaniya is an actual live individual, so is the Buddha. One is unenlightened, the other is enlightened, and the latter produces on the former a certain effect. He too goes in the direction of enlightenment.

Lokamitra: This brings home very much a common experience I am sure to us all, and that is that very often people, not who we meet at the centre, but people outside, just cannot understand what on earth - they cannot appreciate anything which is not to do with, if you like, the wheel or material world and ...

S: Someone at Sukhavati mentioned that only yesterday I think. He met a relation or an old friend, (and) they just couldn't understand it, of course, he'd given up his job, given up his promising career but he was very happy - they just couldn't understand. 'Well, what has he got to be happy about?' He has given up his job, he hasn't got any money, he has got no prospects, he is living there somewhere in the East End with a lot of other people, he is just doing rough labouring work. How can he be happy? But he seems happy! So, it's very puzzling.

Lokamitra: I've just noticed with for example, with relations, it's so puzzling to them, it comes as a threat to their whole existence sometimes. Because it represents the unknown to them, something ...

S: A different set of values.

___: That's how the Buddha came into Dhaniya's life here.

Lokamitra: And it's tremendous just seeing the contact between these two - a sort of horizontal level if you like, and a vertical thing coming into contact here.

S: In a very sort of stark form. Where there is the outward difference, where they are dressed in different ways. There is Dhaniya in his white loin cloth, and the Buddha in his yellow - I won't say robe, it wasn't a robe at that stage - his yellow dress. Dhaniya prosperous, owning things; the Buddha just a wondering beggar, you know, to outward appearances, with nothing - just His begging bowl and the clothes that he just stood up in. Nothing more than that whatever, dependent on what people gave Him from day to day for food. And Dhaniya, rich, prosperous, complacent, contented. A bit boastful in a naive sort of way. Not thinking that there was - or at least not consciously thinking that there was - anything beyond that familiar life. (Pause.) So it's very much a sort of confrontation.

___: And total misunderstanding.

[74]

___: And as you say, the Buddha is in appearance a wanderer or a vagabond but I mean it's deceptive that way because (he) carries the whole armoury, as it were, behind Him, that this poor unsuspecting man has no idea what he is letting himself in for by discussing with Him...

And in a sense nowadays, it's even more deceiving because we don't wear a different dress.

S: Exactly, yes.

___: We're appear completely 'normal'...

S: The same!

___: The same! I mean, you know, it's very much (?)

S: Sometimes, even appear in smart suits these days. But when he opens his mouth or she opens her mouth, you are confronted by a completely different outlook and attitude.

Siddhiratna: I went to dinner with somebody who asked - Ray's husband if you remember - and he asked me almost - not exactly - the same question, but very similar; the conversation went like that. Although his was a little bit more aimed as it were because he wasn't just there giving me dinner, he had invited me to talk, as it were, but very sort of similar questions. I found I could talk about most things but there were areas, I can't remember exactly what they were, where there was uncertainty in myself.

S: I remember when I was in India, going from place to place, and part of the time, you know, as a sort of wandering mendicant, the question that people used to ask me, and the thing that really puzzled them - these ordinary Indians - (was) 'How can you cut off connections from your family?' This is you know, your mother and father, and your brothers and sisters if any. Not even 'How can you manage without a wife and children', not that, but 'How can you cut-off from your mother and father, and your brothers and sisters?' So, to many Indians, despite their familiarity with the sadhus and the samyasa ideal, many ordinary householder Indians just could not understand this, especially in the case of a Westerner perhaps.

Marichi: Is this because they spend all their life with their family?

S: Very much so, I think, you know, they are completely embedded in the family. They used to say: well, 'how can you leave your mother and father?' And 'Don't you want to see them?' And I'll say: 'Well, no, not particularly. I remember them, certainly, I remember them in a quite positive way. I don't feel any need to see them. This rather baffled them.

___: The other question you get: 'Is your family line going to end with you?', is another question.

S: There is that, yes. (Presumably) you say: 'Well, I've got an elder brother who is married and got children', that helps. But if you are their only son, or if you are the only son, well, you know, I used to be asked: 'Aren't your mother and father weeping for you?' They used to imagine my mother and father actually just spending the whole day, just weeping, that they hadn't seen me for so many [75] years.' And I used to say: 'Well, as far as I know, they are getting on with their own lives; they are not thinking about me all the time. And they found this quite hard to understand.

I referred this man to a telephone directory - there was at least half a dozen of my name in there anyway. (Laughter.)

S: I am afraid if people are begging, especially if younger people or children are begging in India, the thing that they say to really rouse your sympathy - 'No mama, no papa!', they say 'No mama, no papa.' Well, they are saying: that is really the great tragedy, as it were, that really deserves sympathy and help, that they have no mother or father. That is the sort of ultimate suffering as it were. In a way it is for very young children. But even adults think like that.

The orphans of Dickens and things like that, it brings to mind.

S: I mean, the Indian tradition - the Hindu tradition especially - is very, very embedded in and attached to family life. I mean it's as though in the Buddha's day, there started up a very strong reaction to that on the part of many people. We find the Buddha declaring, and the disciples declaring, that the household life is very 'stuffy', 'free as the air is the open road'. There was this sort of wanderlust and the will to get away from the swarming family, as it were. You might have several dozen people under one roof - they really got a bit too much sometimes. People just leave, just to have a bit of space, a bit of air. You used to find this quite a bit with the Nepalese, you know, when I was in Kalimpong, with extremely large families, and lots of them all living in comparatively small houses. There would always be a lot of people to a single room and several people in one bed, I mean no one had the luxury of a bed to himself or herself. There is always three or four people in every bed! (Laughter.) And if you wanted to stay with anybody, you were always put in bed with somebody. You never got a bed to yourself - no! It just didn't happen. They just didn't have that number of beds.

___: Sounds a bit like Sukhavati!

S: So, you can imagine people feeling that sort of life to be rather stuffy. It was not quite like life for many people in England today. We've got a nice quiet room of your own and a bed to yourself. May be your own bathroom - quite a different sort of household life. In the Indian family situation often you have no privacy whatever. Indians, of course, admittedly don't usually seem to feel the need of this, but some do, and therefore they just leave - they can't stand it any more. They want some space. Many of these people become sadhus or sanyasins. I am sure this is one of the reasons, not necessarily anything highly spiritual in all cases, but just the need for elbow room, people who feel like just wandering and not settling down anywhere, you know, for life - free, even in the ordinary sense. And very often this leads to a seeking for freedom in a more profound sense. (Pause.)

___: What is a 'sanyasin'?

S: A 'sanyasin' means 'one who is, who has formally renounced the world.' The 'sadhu' is just the wandering holy man who may not have formally renounced the world, and does not belong to any particular [76] monastic tradition. The sadhu is a sort of freelance monk, using the word 'monk' quite loosely, whereas the sanyasin belongs to a definite line or order.

___: I get a bit concerned, shall we say, about the household situation being used as the antithesis of the holy life, in the sense that people who are in that situation for the time being irretrievably, shall we say, in the sense that they've got permanent responsibilities for a number of years, they would get the feeling perhaps wrongly, from something like this, that there is no possibility of development for them; there is no real future in Buddhism for them.

S: Well, put it in this way. Supposing the Buddha came to their door and said to them what the Buddha said to Dhaniya, how would they feel?

___: Well, they might well feel he was right. But what I was getting at is it's not the Buddha who comes and says it. It's not so convincing perhaps.

S: Well, if it isn't convincing, it doesn't convince. So there is no problem. (Laughter.) Where, if it convinces, there is no problem because you act upon your conviction regardless. If it doesn't convince, then you don't take any action of that sort, but then again there is no problem.

___: But it would be easy to wrongly convince people that you were saying there is not a possibility for development in a particular situation.

S: What do you mean by 'wrongly convince'? I don't think it's anything to do with situation.

___: No, I don't.

S: (The thing) situation is secondary. So, I don't think one should mitigate what one has to say, or the force of what one has to say, thinking 'Well, if I say to people in such and such a situation, it will make things difficult for them', that's for them to work out in the way that they wish.

___: I didn't quite mean that. What I meant was that this type of antithesis would tend to make householders think 'Well, you know, however lofty or interesting Buddhism seems, I can't do it'.

S: But how would that be? How is it that it didn't make Dhaniya and Gopi feel like that?

___: Ah, well their children have grown up. They could in principle, just leave.

S: But they don't apparently.

___: But it seems to suggest that ...

S: But, if one is confronted with the ideal, either one should leave or one should not. The thing is, not to 'wobble' as the Zen people say. If you are confronted by the ideal in whatsoever form, whether person, book or your own reflections, and that ideal demands a certain course of action, then you follow that course of action. If you think it doesn't, well fair enough, that's your decision. There does not seem [77] to be really any difficulty.

___: Well, there isn't for me.

S: Might there be? Do you think? Or, why are you considering a difficulty for some hypothetical person?

___: Well, because in a sense I might be taken as representing that type of person.

___: By whom?

___: Well, by myself. I see myself as a spokesman for someone in that situation which ...

S: Surely one should only speak for oneself, or think for oneself. I mean other people are responsible for themselves, just as you are for yourself. It's as though we don't trust other people. Surely, they can, you know, bear the impact of the ideal and respond in their own way, just as we respond in our way according to the particular situation in which we are.

___: Yes, so long as the ideal is accurately represented, yes.

S: Well, that's our responsibility, if we represent the ideal. But for instance if we take up a passage like this, it's totally unambiguous.

___: Well, I think it is to us, but it might not be to someone else.

S: But why should we consider these hypothetical examples - are you suggesting we shouldn't allow people to read the Sutta Nipata? But why are we so concerned to shield people - I mean the hypothetical people?

___: Well, I am trying to get people somewhat like this interested in Buddhism and if they read something like this they might be completely put off.

S: So you are suggesting we should shield them, as it were, from a particular passage of this kind? But it's not a question of our presentation, it is what the Buddha says. So, you feel we should perhaps shield them from what the Buddha says in this particular passage?

___: Well, shield them from their own interpretation of it perhaps, yes.

S: But, this sounds very hypothetical.

___: But you could say we have sat and studied this at great length, and that the impression gained (Inaudible).

S: But I would say that the person you are speaking of, or thinking of, possibly, would misunderstand anything. It's the person who misunderstands, say, a Tantric thangka and thinks it justifies sex. You can't avoid these misunderstandings. But I don't think you can safeguard against them by keeping certain things out of people's hands. But the only thing you can do is to insist that Buddhism is to be studied within the traditional context, that you cannot really get a satisfactory idea about Buddhism by reading or anything of that sort.

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You can only get it through actual direct contact with members of the spiritual community, and that covers everything. It's not that they might misunderstand this passage. Without that contact, they probably misunderstand any passage, or misunderstand any passage however clear it may appear to us because they don't see it within the context of actual practice, by a spiritual community.

___: It seems to me that, you know, the household life - if it's used as a situation where there are certain limitations and ties - that not unreasonable to use it like that, especially in view of the fact which you've said about the extended family in India. If one was that kind of - one

had that little space for oneself - or well, that is quite an extreme situation of where one is sort of tied. So if it is then used - if the household life is used - sort of saying well, this is a life where one is not free, where one has certain limitations - that is to be seen in relation to that background, well, then we have to relate it or you have to relate it to your own situation here. So, if you are in a household life, well does it make you feel that bad or does it not? Well, if it doesn't, that's fine. But it's not the household life per se, that is meant here. If it does make you feel bad, well then you know that's your situation that you have to do something about. I think one just has to relate it to one's own.

S: Well, what we are getting at is that one shouldn't try to shield people from the impact of the ideal, on the assumption that they will not be able to work it out for themselves. Misunderstandings there will always be; in a way, that's a different question. I think there can only be safeguarded against, to some extent, by insisting that the study and practice of Buddhism takes place in the traditional way, not just by reading books.

Dhammadinna: It sounds like you're very unwilling to disrupt anything in any way, which sounds like some sort of insecurity - or security thing, you know. People's lives, if they come in contact with Buddhism, if they come in contact with the Dharma, their lives are going to change in all sorts of different ways, may be quite dramatically for some people, may be not for others.

S: And the responsibility for the kind of change is theirs, not ours. So, if we shield them from the impact of Buddhism or the Dharma, it's as though we're almost making their decisions for them. It's as though we almost don't trust them. (Pause.) Otherwise some well-meaning person might have said to the Buddha: 'Well, look there is that good man Dhaniya, he is very happy with his wife and family, you know; don't disturb him, just speak to him gently about giving a bit of dana to the monks, being a good householder and just observing the silas. Don't go into all this thing about giving up everything and getting rid of anger and not having any possessions, that's too much for him, it will upset him.' Suppose someone had said something of that sort to the Buddha, then what do you think the Buddha's attitude would have been?

___: He would have just gone ahead, I think ...

S: You see, it's very significant that in some of the suttas, we see the Buddha preaching the Dharma, we hear the Buddha preaching the Dharma, and then we are told at the end, the effect on the audience, yes. Some people experience dhyana states; some people are moved to tears, some people have a tremendous upsurge of faith and devotion, [79] other people gain stream entry. Some even gain arhantship. All different effects. Again, some people Go for Refuge, and leave it at that. Others undertake to observe the Silas. Some say they want to become bhikkhus. But they have all listened to the same teaching. It's the same ideal that's made an impact on them all, but they all respond in their own way, and the Buddha does not say 'Oh, you must all respond in the same way', you all ought to become stream-entrants, you all ought to become monks, no! But he does not try to sort of select; it's the same Dharma that he preaches. So we - there were two things. One: that everybody's confronted by the same ideal, but they respond to it in different ways, to different degrees, according to where they are, according to their particular situation, and so on. But I don't think we should try to shield people from the impact of the ideal by ourselves saying 'Well, they are in a certain situation, therefore they should not be exposed to the ideal in that particular way. They will sort that out

for themselves. We've no right to sort of prejudge the issue, as it were, surely, provided we are just faithful transmitters of what the Buddha has said, or whatever we have understood ourselves. And in any case, we can't stop people reading things. Therefore the only thing we can insist on, or at least remind people about, is that the text needs to be studied within the proper context, which means the spiritual community - where these sort of things are understood. (Pause.) And also people require a tremendous amount of shaking. They may be very greatly moved, just for a minute or two, but sometimes afterwards it's as though it hadn't been. I think we shouldn't underestimate people's capacity for resistance, even if we do think that's a good thing - which we may not necessarily do. (Pause.) I feel it is very important as it were to trust people. I mean that they are capable of assuming the responsibility for their own spiritual destiny, for themselves; (decide) to what extent or in what way they are going to respond. It's not for us to take that decision for them. I think what you said almost suggests that we should do that.

: Well, not quite that, no. What I am suggesting is that this kind of text, through their misunderstanding of it because it is not commonplace in the West to accept that you need a tradition to read a book, you normally take your own judgement at face value, it would be easier for them to misinterpret this to the extent of saying 'Well, Buddhism is a load or rubbish' or 'it's not for me in my situation because I've got responsibilities that I don't feel I can break.

S: But that ...

: (Interrupting) But does it actually say this?

: Well, it doesn't no.

S: But then the possibility of misunderstanding arises with regard to every single teaching of the Buddha - misunderstanding of one kind or another. This is one of the difficulties of the whole situation, not just this particular teaching. For instance someone might read another text of a completely opposite kind and might therefore conclude that the life of a bhikkhu was completely unnecessary and a waste of time, and that Buddhism did advise - for instance they might read the Vimalakirti Nirdeśa, and take that as a glorification of ordinary household life and a rejection of monasticism. That would be an example of the opposite kind of extreme, the opposite misunderstanding. But you can't guarantee against misunderstanding except to some [80] extent in the long run by bringing the seriously interested into contact with the spiritual community. Otherwise there will always be misunderstanding. I mean, if you read books written by university professors and people with doctorates who've read Pali and Sanskrit, Chinese and Japanese and Tibetan - they are absolutely riddled with misunderstandings of the teachings, and they have all the texts in the original languages in some cases. That's not safeguarded them against misunderstanding. Even, sometimes they have devised very elaborate misunderstandings all of their own. (Pause.)

___: I think it's often the point that Buddhism may not be for them, in their present situation, with their present responsibilities, and I think that we mustn't be afraid of seeing that - that some people, they can't have everything as it were, they can't evolve spiritually and keep what they've got. And, I think, it's in a way...

Marichi: Well, that's an individual decision.

Lokamitra: I think sometimes we want to attract people along, and make it very easy for them, yeah, and it's almost as if it's a reflection of something that's happening in ourselves. So we say; 'Well, you don't have to give up anything, you don't have to do anything.' But there is some people definitely their present situation is not ...

S: (Interjecting) some people are happy to be told that you should give up, you ought to give up certain things, and that there is a definite commitment to be made; it makes them feel there is something very real to it.

___: Really solid, yes.

___: I think there are quite a few people in situations who cannot go in that situation if they want to evolve, if you like.

(Pause. Other people seem to be arriving:)

___: Bring him in! Alaya! Bring him in!

S: Come on. It will be all right, it's not going to go on for very long. Don't shield them from the truth! (Laughter.) (To Alaya) They are afraid it might bowl you over. Just pretend you're not listening! (More laughter.)

Lokamitra: I think we can go further than that and say that if it doesn't affect their present situation, then there is something wrong in how they have received it and that it should drastically affect their situation.

___: That's what I was trying to say.

S: I think Suvrata's point raises two quite distinct questions, which have got a bit mixed up. One is this whole question of misunderstanding. I don't think we can prevent people from misunderstanding the Dharma however careful we are, so long as they remain out of contact with the spiritual community. I just don't think that is possible on any level, whether it's a very sort of ordinary mundane work-a-day level, or at the highest academic level. So long as people are out of contact with the living spiritual tradition, they will misunderstand the Dharma, and anything they read about it. So that's one separate question. The other separate question is whether we should exercise [81] any caution in presenting people with the ideal, or presenting the ideal to people, I don't think we should. I think we should as it were leave the Dharma and the individual to sort it out between them, without ourselves getting...

Siddhiratna: Are you saying there should be no sort of filtering, as it were.

S: No filtering, no. If we ourselves have a direct personal, spiritual relationship with someone, then that is a rather different matter. Even, it's not that we are filtering, we are just communicating directly our own experience, our own understanding, our own insight. We aren't thinking that we should filter. May be we do, in effect, but we don't as it were do it deliberately or intentionally.

Siddhiratna: I don't see that, Bhante. I mean if you are communicating your experience as far as it goes, then you may well sort of phrase or word what you want to say very carefully to

accommodate that person's ...

S: But that is not mitigation.

___: I am not sure what mitigation means.

S: You are not, as it were, withholding the fullness of the truth because you think that person can't bear it, otherwise there is no communication.

___: One does treat beginners differently from more advanced...

S: Yes, because it is a context of communication. You don't have an abstract - you may have an abstract idea about Sunyata or even an understanding of Sunyata - but as soon as you open your mouth to the beginner, can you speak about Sunyata? It's not that you decide not to, it is that you cannot within that particular context of communication, and that's a quite different thing, yeah, you see?

___: Yes.

S: So, supposing to come back to this particular text, supposing, if someone of your acquaintance, a quite ordinary person, says 'I picked up a book the other day, the Sutta Nipata, it's about Buddhism, I am reading it, I think it will give me some idea about Buddhism.' I think we can't say 'Oh, no, you shouldn't read that sort of book', or try to get it out of his hands, because we feel that the impact of that on him will be too much, as it were. I think he will filter it for himself if necessary.

___: It wasn't quite that, it was just another book may have a much more liberating effect on...

S: Oh sure, if someone asks you, well obviously you will give, or lend the book that you think best. But you know that wasn't your original point really.

___: Well, perhaps I...

S: You were thinking, or speaking, more in terms of actually shielding someone from the impact of this sort of teaching, on the assumption that they would misunderstand it. But, as I said, I think the two things - the misunderstanding and the confrontation with the Ideal - [82] are two separate issues.

Marichi: He is also talking about a negative reaction and a positive reaction, you know, assuming that there is a positive reaction then that will go on further (?)

S: Well, put it this way. Probably, we can say that there will always be a negative reaction when the Ideal is presented - at least to some extent; the unconditioned threatens the conditioned. The spiritual does genuinely threaten the worldly. There is no other possibility. So there must be that, it cannot be otherwise. That must be a challenge. But, therefore, as Dhammadinna said, or Lokamitra said, 'It can't be, as it were, 'easy' 'or can't be made easy.' But, nor should we try to make it easy. There will be a threat, there will be a disruption.

Siddhiratna: When you're actually dealing with people, how does one sort of ... I still seem to

think that you should in fact, not - well 'threat' is quite a strong word. You shouldn't allow the threat to become a threat. That one should sort of allow... in some way, you say what you have to say, or what you feel needs saying, but you don't make it a threat.

S: You don't make it a threat, you certainly don't intend it to be a threat, you only intend to speak the truth as it were. But supposing for instance, you are talking to somebody who is completely new to Buddhism, supposing you say: 'According to Buddhism, you must give up everything'. Now, is that a communication? Or, put it round the other way, if you are genuinely in communication with that new inquirer, that beginner, will you say that kind of thing?

___: No! (And concurring murmurs)

S: You won't!

___: Not unless they ask that kind of thing.

S: Of course you won't. Why? Because you are in communication. Not that you have an abstract idea of what you want to say, but deliberately refrain from saying it, no. If you are in communication, you cannot say that sort of thing because when you communicate you communicate a meaning. And that abstract form of words, which is all it is for that particular person 'Buddhism says you must give up everything', will not convey any meaning; is not meaningful.

___: Therefore it's not communication?

S: Therefore not communication.

Jinamata: Communication means that you are aware of that person, and you are receptive and you receive them, so you don't make meaningless statements because then you are not aware of them and you don't communicate.

S: The abstract is the meaningless in this sort of context. It has only got a formal meaning, that according to Buddhism you must give up everything; there is no real meaning in that for that sort of person to whom you are speaking. I mean if your assessment of the situation, and their particular position is correct.

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Jinamata: If somebody asked me something - like what you said Suvrata - if they ask you that, I mean them: 'what do you mean?', because what do they mean - if they say something like that to me, I want to know what they are talking about because I don't understand it if they say that to me; that's what I usually do. I want to know what they are talking about.

S: So therefore I am also saying it's not a question of having some abstract conceptual idea of a truth, not to be communicated because someone is not ready for it. If you are in contact with them, in communication with them, you can only communicate what they are ready for. You can't do anything else. There is no problem therefore. Even if they read this, if they are not ready for it, it won't sink in. There won't even be a misunderstanding for it; they won't even get that far! (Laughter.)

___: (Inaudible.)

S: Yes. Well, we know it ourselves. We've read Buddhist scriptures often enough and it just hasn't sunk in at all. We read it two or three years later and it's terribly meaningful and we can't even remember reading those words though we know we must have done.

___: It happens with your books, with your talks (?)

S: Yes, right. Anything of that sort. (Pause.) So it seems to me as though what you'd said sort of assumes the setting up of a situation in a rather artificial sort of way, and I don't think that is necessary.

___: I don't think I meant to imply that anyway.

S: Actually, I think there is no problem really.

___: Well, I still wouldn't give them the Sutta Nipata. I'd probably give them something like 'The Path of Inner Life'. No more would I give them the Hevajra Tantra.

___: (Inaudible) something cultural?

S: But what you were originally speaking of was in terms of the almost disruptive impact of the ideal on their life. What I was saying was we've no business to shield people from that as it were - on the plea that they might misunderstand. Perhaps we are being over-protective. Perhaps they will understand. You know, it's been surprising, quite a number of people have said to me that the first book on Buddhism they read was the 'Survey of Buddhism' and that is what brought them in. But that wouldn't have been the first book I would have given to a beginner! If a beginner was to ask me even now to recommend a book on Buddhism for them to read as their first book on Buddhism I don't think I'd give them 'The Survey'. But I've met many people who read that before any other book and who got on to Buddhism because of that. And that is really quite extraordinary if you think of it. The first book I ever read on Buddhism was 'The Diamond Sutra'! Well you might think what could be less suitable for a boy of sixteen than 'The Diamond Sutra'? How could he possibly understand it? Well, probably he didn't, but it didn't turn him away from Buddhism - far from it.

Lokamitra: You seem to have a very set idea of a certain person?

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___: Well I do. Well, not a certain person, but a certain class of people.

Lokamitra: You'd definitely give them 'this' and not 'that'? You are quite straightforward. I would give them The Path of Inner Life or something (?)

: Well, not that in particular, that kind of sort of rather positive, inspirational type of literature.

Jinamata: But this - you can't say that this is not positive inspiration (?)

Marichi: Well, it can be if you just read it through on your own without this particular

context.

Dhammadinna: Well if you give someone a book then they are in communication with it (and can be talking about it?)

S: But again, we are mixing up two things. There is the manner of teaching and the content, and you originally started off with objecting to someone in a certain situation being exposed to the full impact of the Dharma. That was your original objection, wasn't it?

: Well, it may have been what I said, but it wasn't what I meant. (Laughter.)

S: Well, certainly one should be positive rather than negative in one's presentation, though even a negative presentation has its appeal in a positive way for some people. But I just want to make it clear that we shouldn't sort of stand between people and the Dharma as distinct from suggesting a particular kind of approach, or expression of the Dharma.

You seemed a bit concerned with what people would do after receiving the impact; that this seemed to be very much your point. (But) supposing the Dharma really hit them, well then what would happen to them in that sort of situation, and those responsibilities and so on. I'd say we should have faith that someone who has been affected by the Dharma will work that out for himself or herself, that we don't need to do that for them, in advance.

Lokamitra: In a way, that they are in contact with the spiritual community is ...

S: Well, if they are in contact with the Dharma and have been affected by the Dharma, as it were, the Dharma will guide them.

: There seems to be quite a danger in trying to blend the spiritual with the worldly without disrupting either - which can't really be fully done.

: I don't understand that!

: Well trying to sort of maintain a completely worldly life and all its implications and follow the spiritual life as well - get into Buddhism; this just is not on without changing your actual external life.

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: Well, that's just the sort of thing you have to be careful about saying, because otherwise you are excluding from the province of Buddhism a very large portion of the population.

___: Well of course you are not, because they are capable of change just as much as anyone else.

Jinamata: But equally it isn't true to say that ...

___: (Interrupting) No, I am saying you've got to be careful about saying that. Not that you shouldn't say it because you can so easily say it wrong and (Inaudible.)

S: But, again that applies to every aspect of the Dharma. But that is a different thing because

we were originally talking about the impact of the Dharma itself especially as it's expressed in the scriptures. But obviously we ourselves do take it upon ourselves to act as mouthpieces of the Dharma, we have to be careful all the time, whoever we are dealing with.

___: I think one also has to be clear about what the worldly life is.

S: I don't think one should think about the situation that the person is in, whether he is living a worldly life or not; you've got 'X, Y or Z' in front of you and you are talking with him. You have a certain feeling of him and sense of him. Be as honest as you can. I don't think you need to consider any more than that.

___: Well, most of the people one's going to come across with are in the worldly life. You are in the spiritual life

S: Yes. Just communicate as honestly as you can, as best as you can. Don't think 'Ah, well he's got an important job and if I push such and such an aspect of the Dharma too much, then he might go and give up his job and that will mean certain difficulties'. Well, he is a responsible individual; he will work out that for himself.

___: (?)

S: I do think sometimes, in our early days, we - there is perhaps an unconscious tendency for us to sort of screen and almost censor the teaching rather than allow people to be exposed to the teaching itself. Do you see what I mean? I think that is also one of the things we must be careful about. And that is quite a different thing from being careful about ourself and our own particular opinions and limitations getting in the way. But of course we must be sure that they don't get in the way. (Pause.)

Are there any other general points arising out of all that?

Lokamitra: I think we must beware of thinking that Buddhism has to be for everybody. I get this feeling sometimes in what you were saying this evening that (another voice interrupting: you've got to make it respectable.) Or it's got to get through to everyone.

___: Do you think that's not so, Lokamitra?

Lokamitra: I don't think it should really concern us too much; some people would just not be open to it. Some people...

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___: Well I feel this very much in terms of publicity material we present. I mean there is always a kind of difficulty in knowing what kind of images to use on a tape and how quite to present those. You are talking about an image as it were and the presentation of information (?) and how you are going to do it. Whether the Buddha should be Eastern or Western. It's very difficult to gauge the atmosphere of the time and who you are communicating with

S: Well, you just have to do your best. You can be pretty certain that any given item of publicity will attract some people and put off others. You just have to try to minimize the number of those who are likely to be put off and maximize the number of those who are

likely to be attracted. You can't do anything more than that.

___: (Inaudible.)

S: Even the response to the Buddha himself was very mixed. Look at Devadatta's response! I think we ought to accept almost the right of people to reject what we have to offer.

___: The Buddha, I mean, he's supposed to have started teaching for the sake of those with very little dust in their eyes. He didn't see much point in ...

S: Potentially, the Dharma is aimed at all because he also says (?) for the benefit of the many, the good of the many. But certainly make it available as widely as you can. But, you know, a lot of the seeds will fall (to change the metaphor?) - on waste ground. Ideally the Dharma is aimed at all, but not everybody will respond. We have to catch people at the right moment.

Lokamitra: It's not a personal failing, it's not a failing of the Movement or the Order necessarily if people don't respond.

S: It's not a failing of 'you'.

I think this is a very important point especially for people who are, say, giving talks, taking classes - it's so easy to feel a bit downhearted or disappointed if any given week very few people turn up and may be it goes on like that for weeks or months. It's very easy to feel: 'Well, there is something wrong with me; either I am not being clear enough or, I haven't got an attractive personality', or something of that sort, or, 'if only I could put it better'. It may be that if you'd been able to put it better, you'd have got more people, but you have done your honest best and you can't do more than that. So you must just accept that situation - you really have done your best, and that's all that can be expected of you, all that can be asked of you. If you do that, then you have succeeded - even if you only attract a few people, even if you attract none. So we have to watch that, especially those that are involved in that sort of way. The only thing we can expect from ourselves is that we do our best. We can regret, in a quite objective non-remorseful way that we aren't more capable, but, as I've said, in an objective way. (Even the Buddha did not always succeed.)

Voice: (Inaudible.)

S: Lead as gently or as skilfully as you like. But I mean people have residual freedom as it were, to reject. So one has to respect that even though it is rejecting everything that we think is worthwhile or that is worthwhile. And if they don't have that freedom, to reject, they don't have the freedom to follow either. (Pause.)

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I think I must say from my own personal experience of dealing with people, sometimes when one is asked: 'well, if you look back on your career' - I mean not that I am looking back yet, I hope I've a few more years to go: - But sometimes people ask me if you look back, you know, would you have done things differently in the light of subsequent knowledge and experience and understanding. Sometime ago someone asked me something of this sort and I said something half jokingly but half seriously, I said 'if I had my time over again, I'd allow myself to get angry more often.' Well, sort of developing that line of thought, I think looking back

that in the past - especially in the more remote past - I think looking back I should have been much more outspoken and more, as it were, absolute, and made things not quite so easy for people as sometimes I did. Looking back into my quite early days, I do feel this.

___: Your early days in England?

S: More India, but even England, yes, even England. (Pause.) I think one shouldn't, as it were, hold back, not if one is honestly convinced. Not be afraid of hurting people's feelings in a precious sort of way. I mean if you really are honest and say what you really think and feel, I think people's feelings are not hurt. I think sometimes people appreciate this sort of very strong and very radical attitude, uncompromising attitude, if it is honest and genuine. And if it's not just you being bloody-minded in the guise of being honest and straight forward. (Pause.)

But if someone says 'Well does Buddhism mean you've got to give up everything?' then well, yes, it does. This is really what it does mean. But also Buddhism has got consideration for human nature and it says 'well, if necessary, do it bit by bit!' But if someone says - if they ask the same question - and you say 'Well, not really; sometimes it's put in that way but it's not be taken too seriously, don't take it literally.' Just like the Christian bishop says 'Well, Christ did say turn the other cheek, but he didn't really mean it of course, it's entirely metaphorical. What he really meant is you just hit back good and proper'. (Laughter.) This is one of the reasons why the Christian church and its representatives are criticized so much, they have compromised in this sort of way. There is virtually no Christian who really follows Christ's extreme-precepts. And if you ask any average clergyman, or bishop, or archbishop, or even the pope, they all say 'Well, these are counsels of perfection and are not to be taken literally. You know Christ was an oriental, spoke in a highly metaphorical way, etc, etc.

Lokamitra: There is not much point in someone following such a path ...

S: Some of the Franciscan spirituals as they are called, a branch of St Francis' movement, were actually burned at the stake by the Church for insisting that Christ's commandment of poverty was to be taken literally. (Pause.) I think we are much more likely to get a response from more people if we are a bit, as it were, drastic. But not in a bloody-minded way, but just because that is what we really feel, what we really believe and what we really experience. I think this is one of the great drawbacks in the whole country at present, that nothing is demanded of anybody, everybody's been spoon-fed, and I think a lot of people are fed up with being spoon-fed. I get the feeling there is a sort of mood in the country among many quite ordinary people, they are fed up with being spoon-fed. [88] They want a genuine demand to be made on them which they can honestly respond with their real self and really get into something worthwhile that they believe in and have to work for, even sacrifice for.

Lokamitra: People coming along here, or even more to Sukhavati, are so impressed that we are doing it ourselves. We are not, you know, (?) they are impressed with the spirit behind it all and this is, I think, what affects them most, to feel that sort of strength...

S: Even the sort of life they are leading at Sukhavati... certainly during the very cold weather, certainly wasn't very comfortable or you know anything of that sort, but everybody enjoyed it, everyone (laughter) ... Well, even if they didn't enjoy it, they were glad they were there! (Laughter.)

___: No comments from the back-row please!

S: No rude comments!

Anyway, perhaps we'd better close on that note unless anyone else wants to say anything? I think we should have enough faith in human nature to make demands on people.

Lokamitra: Funny, I just think we got to roar aloud what we have got here, you know, and what we are doing; people respond to that sort of thing.

S: It's true that we should temper the wind to the shore and the land, but the thing is they are not the land, not really.

___: Ah, yes...

S: Anyway I think it's bed-time for most of us...

Voice: Thank you very much, Bhante. (Pause.)

(Sutta starts on a separate sheet.)

S: Tonight we've got rather a longer sutta; I suggest someone reads it straight through and then we'll look at it verse by verse as we did in the case of the previous sutta though we may not have quite so much time for divergencies (?). Who would like to read it through?

Khema(?): (Please turn to next page for text)

[89]

KHAGGAVISANA SUTTA

Sutta of the Rhinoceros

Put by the rod for all that lives,
Nor harm thou any one thereof;
Long not for son - how then for friend?
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

Love cometh from companionship;
In wake of love upsurges ill
Seeing the bane that comes from love,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

In ruth for all his bosom-friends,
A man, heart-chained, neglects the goal:
Seeing this fear in fellowship,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

Tangled as crowding bamboo boughs
Is fond regard for sons and wife:

As the tall tops are tangle free,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

The deer untethered roams the wild
Whitherso e'er it lists for food:
Seeing the liberty, wise man,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

With friends one is at beck and call,
At home, abroad, on tour for alms:
Seeing the liberty, none want,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

With friends there's mirth and merriment,
And love for sons is very great:
Full loath to serve the ties of love,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

Free everywhere, at odds with none,
And well content with this and that:
Enduring dangers undismayed,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

Some home-forsakers ill consort,
As householders who live at home:
Indifferent to other folk,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

Casting aside the household gear,
As sheds the coral tree its leaves,
With home-ties cust and vigorous,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

If one find friend with whom to fare,
None in the well-abiding, apt,
Surmounting dangers one and all,
With joy fare with him mindfully.

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Finding none apt with whom to fare,
None in the well-abiding rapt,
As rajah quits the conquered realm,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

Surely we praise accomplished friends;
Choose thou the best or equal friends:
Not finding these and loving right,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

Seeing how glittering bangles o' gold
Tho' finely wrought by goldsmith's art,
Jangle when twain on arm are set,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

Bethink thee, 'Thus with others joined,
What wordy talks, what scolds for me!'
Seeing this fear lies in the way,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

Gay pleasures, honeyed, rapturous,
In divers forms churn up the mind:
Seeing the bane of pleasure's brood,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

'They are a plague, a blain, a sore,
A barb, a fear, disease for me!'
See this fear in pleasure's brood,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

The heat and cold, and hunger, thirst,
Wind, sun-beat, sting of gadfly, snake:
Surmounting one and all of these,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

As large and full-grown elephant,
shapely as lotus, leaves the herd
When as he lists for forest haunts
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

'Tis not for him who loves the crowd
To reach to temporal release:
Word of Sun's kinsman heeding right,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

Leaving the vanities of view,
Right method wond, the way obtained:
'I know! No other is my guide!'
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

Gone greed, gone guile, gone thirst, gone grudge,
And winnowed all delusions, faults,
Wantless in all the worlds become
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

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Shun thou the evil friend who sees
No goal, convinced in crooked ways;
Serve not at will the wanton one,

Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

Seek for thy friend the listener,
Dharma-endued, lucid and great;
Knowing the needs, expelling doubt,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

Play, pleasures, mirth and worldly joys,
Be done with these and heed them not;
Aloof from pomp and speaking truth,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

Son, wife and father, mother, wealth,
The things wealth brings, the ties of kin:
Leaving these pleasures one and all,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

They are but bonds, and brief their joys,
And few their sweets, and more their ills,
Hooks in the throat! - this knowing, sure,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

Snap thou the fetters as the snare
By river denizen is broke:
As fire to waste comes back no more
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

With downcast eyes, not loitering,
With guarded senses, warded thoughts
With mind that festers not, nor burns,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

Shed thou householder's finery,
As coral trees its leaves in fall:
Are going forth in yellow clad,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

Crave not for tastes, but free of greed,
Moving with measured step from house
To house, support of none, none's thrall,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

Rid of the mind's five obstacles,
Void of all stains whate'er, thy trust
In none, with love and hate cut out,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

And turn thy back on joys and pains,
Delights and sorrows known of old;

And gaining poise and calm, and cleansed
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

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Astir to win the yondmost goal,
Not lax in thought, no sloth in ways,
Strong in the onset, steadfast, firm,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

Neglect thou not to muse apart,
'Mid things by Dharma faring aye,
A love to all becomings' bane,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

Earnest, resolved for craving's end,
Listener, alert, not hesitant
Striver, assured, with Dharma summed,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

Like lion, fearful not of sounds,
Like wind not caught within a net,
Like lotus not by water soiled,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

As lion, mighty-jawed and king
Of beasts, fares conquering, so thou;
Taking they bed and seat remote,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

Poise, amity, ruth and release
Pursue and timely sympathy;
At odds with none in all the world
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

And rid of passion, error, hate,
The fetters having snapped in twain,
Fearless when as life ebbs away,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

Folk serve and follow with an aim:
Friends who seek naught are scarce today:
Men, wise in selfish aims, are foul:
Fare lonely as rhinoceros!

[93]

S: I mentioned two weeks ago that the Sutta Nipata is one of the oldest parts of the Pali Canon and I mentioned also that two particular chapters, the Atthavagga, and the Paryanavagga, are the oldest of the Sutta Nipata itself and therefore among the very, very

oldest portions of the whole Pali Canon. Now most scholars believe that this particular Sutta, the Khaggavisana Sutta or the Sutta of the Rhinoceros or Rhinoceros horn is as ancient as those two most ancient chapters, the Atthavagga and the Paryanavagga.

So, therefore, in the Khaggavisana Sutta, in this particular sutta, The Rhinoceros, we have a very ancient or perhaps we should say archaic statement of the original Buddhist ideal. So, let's just consider first of all the general nature of that ideal. In other words, what is the general, the most general impression that we get from the Sutta as a whole - taking it that the Sutta is in fact the word of the Buddha - though it may well have been a stringing together in a ballad-like form of sayings and teachings of the Buddha by a disciple, a stringing together by a disciple. But anyway taking it as the actual teaching of the Buddha or message of the Buddha, what is the Buddha, as it were, trying to say on the whole in this Sutta about the spiritual life?

___: Renunciation and withdrawal.

S: Renunciation and withdrawal?

___: All that means is just the freedom from all entanglements, (?) physical, emotional, psychological, (?) (just) the freedom.

S: It's very similar to the first Sutta, that is to say the Uragavagga - The Snake. There is some difference, at least to emphasis, the bhikkhu leaves behind this, that and the other, just as the snake sheds his worn out skin. But what seems to be more the emphasis here? Not even just getting rid of things, that seems in a way a bit secondary, or a bit sequential.

___: He seems to be saying something about self-reliance.

S: Self-reliance, yes. It's more like that. It's more going forth on your own. It's the sort of ideal that is represented by the whole concept of Pappaja in the literal sense, that is to say the Going Forth which is Going Forth in more material terms from home, children, wife, family and so on. But as it were in a more extended, metaphorical sense, a Going Forth from various unskilful states of consciousness. So here what seems to be stressed is the importance, not to say the necessity, of Going Forth on one's own. In other words, what is stressed here is that the first step of the spiritual life is to disentangle oneself, especially disentangle oneself from other people. Disentangle oneself from the attachments which are usually the bonds between oneself and other people, and just go forth on one's own. Though we will notice that the text also doesn't exclude the possibility of spiritual friends, this is also quite important. But it does say quite categorically that if you have no spiritual friends, it's better not to have any friends at all. In fact, as we shall see, it uses different terms. In this connection, in the very first, no in the second verse, from the translation, there is this line: 'Seeing the bane that comes of love'. 'Love' is obviously in English a very ambiguous word. In the Pali, as I've pointed out before, they distinguish between 'Metta' in the more spiritual sense as it were, friendliness, and 'Pema' or also sometimes 'Sneha'. Let's just see which it is here. Yes, it's 'Sneha'. Sneha means 'love' in the sense of attachment; sometimes it's translated as 'affection'. But it's very definitely a clinging, dependent, attached sort of emotion. So on the whole what seems to be emphasized here is this Going Forth on [94] one's own, both literally and metaphorically. (Pause.) In other words you can't really be an individual unless you are prepared to separate from the group as it were and this is sometimes a quite difficult, not to say painful process.

Someone came to me this morning and was telling me about a recent visit to his parents and he felt a bit troubled because he hadn't been able to communicate to them the nature of his own present interests. He said he tried but they didn't seem to understand and certainly didn't sympathize with what he was trying to convey. So when that sort of thing happens one just has to accept the fact there is not perhaps understanding, there is not perhaps sympathy, but one has to go forth nonetheless, you can't wait for other people's approval or understanding for what you are doing. So, whether or not you, as it were, literally sever your connections, physically sever your connections, at least in your own mind and your own heart you have to go forth, alone. (Pause.) In terms of the life of the Buddha that is of course what is called the (Mahabhi?) - the Buddha's Great Renunciation in the sense of His Going Forth from home into the homeless life. Any body got any thing to say on this? This Going Forth? Because it's a very important, very basis concept, as it were, you know, going forth from the group, going forth from relationships, which are based on 'snaha', rather than metta - the disentangling of oneself.

: I suppose there is a time when you have actually done it, but it seems to be a ... something you keep doing really on different levels.

S: Well, yes, yes, there can be, as in the case of the Buddha, a sort of dramatic, once-and-for-all, at least physical external, going forth. But, you know, in the case of other people, it's little by little and bit by bit. You may for instance just give up a full-time job and take a part time job. You've broken off to some extent, you've gone forth to some extent; or you may give up some of your old friends and cronies but not others. You may give up beer but not wine! (Laughter.) You may stop going to see naughty films but listen to the radio. That is also a gradual process though it isn't necessarily a question of the inevitability of gradualness. You can do it suddenly also, in certain respects, with a short sharp stroke, as it were.

: I bet both probably happens in most people's lives.

S: But, what is important is the disengagement of the individual from the group, or from ties with other people, which are, as it were, sub-individual, which are based on unconscious factors, on attachment.

: It seems to imply quite a large degree of awareness; you've got to be aware of what your ties are before you can leave them. That's why it's gradual.

S: Yes, and sometimes you discover ties that you didn't think were there. You did not realize, you've just taken them so much for granted, or they were so much a part of your life or so interwoven with your life, that you know, you just hadn't thought about them, or felt them until perhaps they were strained or snapped due to circumstances. (Pause.) But the basic thing seems to be spiritual independence - standing on one's own two feet, or rather walking on one's own two feet, or with one's own two feet, and going forth, even literally, even physically but certainly metaphorically, spiritually. (Pause.) Let's go through each of the verses separately.

'Put by the rod for all that lives,
Nor harm thou any one thereof;
Long not for son - how then for friend?

Fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

[95]

So 'Put by the rod for all that lives'; this is a sort of Pali idiom, the rod is 'Danda': 'danda' literally means 'the rod', it also means punishment, it also sometimes means 'justice' because justice according to ancient Indian ideas was the science of punishment. 'Danda shastra' is what we would call 'jurisprudence or law'. So 'Putting by the rod for all that lives' which I suspect is really - yes, it's all living beings - means NOT harming them in any way. Not attacking them, not injuring them; leading a life of complete non-violence. And obviously this was considered to be one of the most important things, for one who has gone forth. Then of course it is embodied in the first precept.

Marichi: Does 'put by the rod' mean put aside the rod, or is it may be where 'rod' means justice?

S: No, here it means simply: don't harm, don't attack. Give up violence - this is probably the real meaning; give up violence, abandon violence with regard to any living being, any creature (?). Give up violence with regard to all creatures or more positively be non-violent with regard to all creatures. 'Nor harm thou any one thereof', the repetition of the idea. Then: 'Long not for son', why do you think this is mentioned? It comes pretty early in the Sutta. We can assume that what comes first is, as it were, emphasized somewhat, it's considered very important. Well certainly non-violence is very important. I mean violence is about the last thing that anyone who has gone forth, anyone who is trying to be a real individual, anyone who is trying to develop spiritually, it's about the last thing he or she should do, to commit violence. So, that's clear enough, it's the first precept. Immediately afterwards 'long not for sons'. So why do you think that comes so soon - as though that's a very important thing, not to long for a son? Perhaps this would be clearer if we remember that very likely the Sutta was, if not actually spoken by the Buddha, composed by and for monks, and may be they are looking at it from the masculine point of view. So bearing that in mind perhaps, why does it say 'long not for sons'? What does it signify? What does it represent - 'longing for a son'?

___: It's continuance in the world.

S: It's 'puttam iccheya'.

___: (?)

S: Yes, it's continuance in the world; you live in your son. Your son, according to ancient Indian ideas, was literally you reborn. It seems in Vedic times before they had the ideas of what we now call 'reincarnation' (that) you were reborn in your son. The son was your son. In the case of a man, he was the prolongation of your existence, the continuation of your ego. So you lived again in your son. So, to give up this desire, this craving for a son, means give up the desire for the prolongation of your own existence, on the biological plane, because this is a reflection of your own mental craving for continued existence. And in ancient India of course there was another aspect to this, especially in brahminical circles, orthodox Hindu circles, that after your death it was the duty of your son to perform certain ceremonies, to make certain offerings. And if those ceremonies were not performed, if these offerings were not -made, you would not go to heaven, you would sink down into a lower state. And this is still very much the belief among Hindus today in India. A man must have a son to perform his

after-death rites, otherwise he does not go to heaven.

Marichi: So if he doesn't have a son he won't go to heaven?

S: Yes, it isn't very, as it were, precisely, theologically formulated, but this is a very deep and strong conviction in orthodox Hindu [96] circles - especially among Brahmins. Why a woman should want a son or a child is (that) sufficiently obvious, but in the case of a man, in the case of the father there are these additional reasons. A daughter cannot perform those ceremonies for you - it must be a son. So first of all there is the natural human desire for children, which is shared by both men and women. Then there is the desire of the man, the father, for a continuation of himself, his own ego, the prolongation of his own existence, and then there is the desire for someone after your death - the ceremonies necessary to ensure your salvation. So the desire for a son therefore represents a very strong desire indeed. I think you'll find this among all primitive people. I am not using the word 'primitive' in any pejorative sense, in a way it's a very basic, almost a healthy sort of instinct, but it is something that from a higher spiritual point of view needs to be transcended, or at least sublimated. So, it's because this desire for a son was so strong in Indian society, especially in orthodox circles, that the point is made here so soon after this point of non-violence, that the desire for a son also is something to be given up. So:

'Put by the rod for all that lives,
Nor harm thou any one thereof;
Long not for son - how then for friend?'

Friend here is more like 'companion' (Sahaya), it means 'one who is with you.' We don't quite have a word for this. It's more like companion.

___: (Interrupting) 'Mate'?

S: Not so strong as that. It's more someone who sort of just goes around with you, a companion, (someone - in ancient India you go to - there is something about this in the Sigalovada Sutta) someone that you go singing and dancing with, and someone you gamble with, and someone you drink with - it's your companion for all these goings on. It's not a friend in a sense of a mitra. In Sigalavada Sutta it speaks in terms of a good friend and the evil friend. This is, of course, the evil friend. The companion in bad ways. So, the one who says 'Come on, let's go to, you know, a party'; 'let's go and do this or go and do that'. It's that sort of friend. Someone who is not very happy if you suggest going and meditating or reading or going on retreat; he is not interested in all that. He wants to drag you off to the pub or something of that kind instead, every night may be.'

___: (Inaudible.)

S: So, it's that sort of friend. So you see there are these three points made in the course of this first verse, that one who is going forth, or one who has gone forth, the would be individual who is trying to break away from all these incestuous ties, one can say. One who is going forth, such a person should practise non-violence. He should give up this longing or craving for a son, he should give up concern for the prolongation of his own existence, either biologically in the form of his son on earth, or even in heaven, due to his son's performance of those after-death ceremonies, and he should also be very careful about his choice of friends

and companions. He should give up the wastrel companion, should not long for a companion of that kind. And he should 'fare lonely as rhinoceros.' Actually, it's more like - a more literal translation is: 'He should fare alone just as the horn of the rhinoceros is single.' Just as the rhinoceros [97] has one horn on the end of its nose, in the same way you should go around by yourself.

___: Any particular reason for choosing that simile? It seems a rather unexpected one quite honestly

S: I don't know, I don't feel that. I suppose I've been accustomed to the Sutta for so long it doesn't seem anything unusual.

___: (?) it's different from the horn of a bullock ...

S: Well, perhaps we should think of the horn of the Unicorn, that would be probably a good parallel.

___: So presumably there was lots of rhinoceros around at that time.

S: That too.

Padmaraja: A unicorn is a mythological beast and this is a much more mundane connotation, isn't it?

___: I just wondered if there was any special reason?

S: I don't think so.

___: Probably a common sight.

S: And its single horn was very prominent. It may even have been a proverb, you know, of which there is just a reminiscence here.

Lokamitra: Usually rhinoceroses go round singly. You very rarely see them about. That's why the species is dying out. (Laughter.)

___: (I want to find out ?)

S: It's: S.A.H.A.Y.A. (Pause.)

S: Right, the next verse goes on to develop this idea of love (SNEHA).

'Love cometh from companionship;
In wake of love upsurges ill;
Seeing the bane that comes of love,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros. '

There you get the feeling of the kind of love (sneha), the affection, the attachment, the clinging that is meant here. How does it come from companionship? (Pause.) If you get very

accustomed to going round with somebody, and you get a certain amount of enjoyment about that, you start getting dependent on that person, for that sort of companionship. And that sort of dependence and the feeling that goes with it - this is what is meant by 'sneha-' or love - as it is translated here, may be not very happily. And 'In wake of love up surges ill.' In the wake of, following upon that sort of attachment, there comes inevitably sooner or later some suffering. So 'Seeing the bane that comes of love, fare lonely as rhinoceros (Pause.)

'In ruth for all his bosom-friends,
A man, heart-chained, neglects the goal:
Seeing this fear in fellowship,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

[98]

Here for friend 'mitte', that means 'mitra'- in the ordinary sense; but opposite to 'doo-mitte', the bad friends. Out of sympathy, it's 'anukapa' - not so much truth but sympathy - out of sympathy or fellow feelings for his ordinary friends and acquaintances, a man 'heart-chained' it says here but the (text says) - 'patibaddhacitta' which means more like 'with bound mind' 'neglects the goal' - what is the goal do you think?

___: It's Enlightenment.

S: It's Enlightenment. In these more ancient Pali texts, enlightenment or Nirvana is very often simply referred to as 'the goal' - 'hapta artha' in Sanskrit. This is a very simple term, the goal.

So 'Seeing this fear in fellowship', in companionship, this danger, more like danger than fear, 'fare lonely as rhinoceros'. We often see this, that sometimes our best friends are our worst enemies as it were because there is (?) may be nothing really (?) common there from a spiritual point of view, but we've got used to these friends, may be we've grown up with them, we've known them for a long time, we're accustomed to going along with them. So we just sort of pass our time with them, do all sorts of trivial things, useless things, and this way the time passes, but all the while we are neglecting the goal, (in a way) we are not really considering what should be the purpose of our own life. We are just involved in this sort of network. I think quite a lot of people are in that sort of position. It's not that anyone's made a definite decision that they're not going to try to develop, but there is this whole network of relationships and acquaintanceships and friendships, so called, and they just divert one and distract one, lead one astray, so that one is not able to devote oneself to what is really the true aim of one's whole existence. (Pause.) Sometimes there is this sort of pseudo-sympathy or pseudo kindness, this 'anukampa' which is a neutral word. Sometimes it is used in a completely positive (way). 'Anukampa' literally means 'vibrating after'; 'Anu' is after; 'kampati' it to shake or vibrate, so 'Anukampati' is to 'vibrate after'. Just if say a certain musical instrument is struck, another instrument vibrates after it in sympathy. So it is like that. Your friend or your acquaintance is in a certain mood or feels like doing something, so you also sympathize. You say: 'Oh I feel like doing that too.' So you do it with him. So in this way we can get very easily distracted. We can spend our whole lives in this kind of way. So seeing this fear in fellowship, seeing how dangerous this sort of companionship is, just go forth on your own. Be a loner. It obviously is going to make one very anti-social and quite unpopular. The early stages of your career before you have any real spiritual friends, when you are just in process of cutting yourself off from the old friends. Sooner or later that becomes inevitable, because you just have so little in common with them. But when you are

in that sort of intermediate stage, you haven't got really very many or any good spiritual friends, and you are still quite attached to the old friends, they can still be quite a source of distraction, so you have to be very careful.

'Tangled as crowding bamboo boughs
Is fond regard for sons and wife:
As the tall tops are tangle-free,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

Chalmers gives an alternative translation here, the verse can be read in two ways. I suppose everybody has seen bamboos growing, yes? They grow in clumps, very, very close together. So the Buddha [99] in this Sutta is saying as it were that family life is just like the clumps of bamboos, because just as the bamboos grow very close together, so in the home you are very close with your sons and with your wife. You notice sons comes before wife. It's 'putte daresu'. This is probably a little psychologically significant. Your sons are more important than your wife. In the same way, we get 'mata pitu' (?) mother and father, never 'father and mother' because, according to Indian ideas the mother is more important in certain respects than the father. So we get 'mother and father', and 'sons and wife'. The Indian never says 'wife and children', it's always 'sons and wife'; daughters aren't mentioned - didn't used to be, anyway. So the family life, the attachment that goes with it, is just like a clump of bamboos all crowded together, but the tops are free; this is one interpretation of the verse. You notice that amongst the bamboos there are just maybe twenty or thirty of them, all growing together, but amongst them there are two or three bamboos that, as it were, spring clear of the rest. And the end of the bamboo, you know, it's just a single straight stem, it's really a giant grass, the end of the stem is just free. There are even sometimes no leaves on it. It just springs straight up several feet clear of the whole clump. So, you should be like that - springing up and out of the clump. But there is an alternative interpretation. According to that interpretation, there are two different kinds of trees. Trees in general, unspecified, and the bamboo. So don't be just like a group of trees all growing together, be like the bamboo that grows up on its own because the bamboo just comes forth as a single shoot, you probably know that, it's just a single shoot that grows up into a stem. So you can look at it either way, the general meaning is quite clear. Either the tip of one particular bamboo springing clear of the whole group of clump, be like that, or be the bamboo which unlike other trees, which sort of huddle together, grows up just in one shoot on its own, solitary. The meaning is the same in either case. But even the comparison with the bamboo isn't enough because, even though you do spring clear of all the other bamboos in the clump, you are rooted to one spot. So it goes on:

'The deer untethered roams the wild
Whitherso e'er it lists for food:
Seeing the liberty, wise man,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

So be like the deer, just wander from place to place, find your food wheresoever you go. In other words, you go forth quite literally. This sort of verse pertains obviously to the bhikkhu just as the whole of the Uragavagga, the snake chapter or the snake sutta, did; it's the bhikkhu that the Buddha is talking about now. But even a bhikkhu's life isn't always perfect, so he goes on: 'With friends one is at beck and call'. People are always asking to do something or go somewhere, keep them company, help them - you are never free. At home, or even abroad outside the home, or even when you've become a bhikkhu, and you are going begging, even

there it happens; another bhikkhu says: 'Oh, please hold my bowl' or 'please help me with my robe', or 'please go and get me a bit extra', or 'would you mind sharing' or 'would you look after that tree for me' (laughter.), even there, there is no freedom from it. So it isn't so easy. The Buddha seems to have rather a downer on friends, in the ordinary sense.

'With friends there is mirth and merriment, and love for sons is very great.' We've seem to have come back home now. 'Full loath to serve the ties of love, fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

[100]

You can have a very good time with your friends but what does it really add up to in the end in the case of ordinary worldly friends? 'And love for sons is very great.' And one is very unwilling to sever the ties based upon affection and attachment, but you have to do it, you have to fare forth, just like the rhinoceros, or just like the rhinoceros's horn which is single. You have to be an individual.

'Free everywhere, at odds with none,
and well content with this and that,
enduring danger undismayed,
fare lonely as rhinoceros.

So again the bhikkhu ideal. How literally do you think this is to be taken, especially now, no doubt in the Buddha's day many people took it quite literally. So how does it work out now do you think?

Voices: It's quite difficult, isn't it? (?)

S: It's difficult to live on alms of course. The important thing seems to be that you should go away, at least from time to time. That seems to be the important thing. Obviously the crux of the matter is the overcoming of the attachment. Now you could say, and many people do say, it doesn't matter about leaving literally, you must leave mentally, and that's true. But how do you know you've left mentally, how do you know that you are not attached unless you put it to the test? And then you put it to the test only by trying to do it quite literally. If you can't do it, as it were, for good, you have to do it from time to time. As when you go away on retreat, especially a solitary retreat, or when you go off to some other country for a while, it's only then that you know whether or not you really are attached. This is the best that most people can do, under present day conditions. (Pause.) The Buddha makes it clear that even in the case of the bhikkhu, one who has literally gone forth, even there difficulties may arise. You may encounter spiritual friends, but if you are not careful you may even yourself, turn them as it were into worldly friends, if the common spiritual basis is lost sight of. So

'Some homeforesakers ill consort,
as householders who live at home,
indifferent to other folk,
fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

Some people give up home, they leave home as bhikkhus, but after leaving home they associate together in a way which is not good, in a way which is unskillful; just like householders who live at home. So what is the good in their case, of their having left home in that literal sense? What is important is that one should be in one's heart indifferent in the

sense of free from attachment to other people. So one must beware of this danger of self-deception, and not say 'I know I am not attached', and never put it to the test.

'Casting aside the household gear
as sheds the coral tree its leaves,
with home ties cut, and vigorous,
fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

If one find friend with whom to fare,
rapt in the well-abiding,
apt, surmounting dangers one and all,
with joy fare with him mindfully.'

Now so far the Buddha has really sort of hammered at this idea of giving up the wrong kind of companionship and no loop holes have been left. The Buddha has said pseudo-spiritual companionship is not good, it must be real spiritual companionship. No good sort of merely giving up externally. But if you can find a friend, that is to say someone dedicated to the same spiritual ideal, the same spiritual way of life as yourself, by all means fare on with him. So 'If one find friend with whom to fare, rapt in the well adding,' - this is 'Sadhu vihari dhiram' - means 'one who is absorbed, meditative also wise.' It's the word which comes from 'Dhib' which is the bija mantra of Manjushri. We have also the word 'dhiman' (?) possessed of 'dhih' possessed of wisdom, concentrated, wise. So, it's that same word here which is translated as 'rapt'.

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___: What's the word in Pali?

S: 'DHIRAM' with a dot under it. 'Sadhu vihara': 'dwelling in what is good. So 'absorbed in that which well dwells.' This is of course an adjective applied to that friend. 'Surmounting dangers one and all, with joy fare with him mindfully.' You notice that there is two words 'with joy' and also 'mindfully'. Certainly be joyful if you've found a real friend, a true friend, a spiritual friend and fare with him but don't let that joy make you unmindful; continue to be mindful. So having made it absolutely clear that one is to avoid and leave the ordinary sort of friend, the Buddha makes it also clear that if one can find a spiritual friend, a true friend, then by all means fare on with him or her, and fare on joyfully but still mindfully too.

'Finding none apt with whom to fare,
none in the well-abiding rapt,
as rajah quits the conquered realm,
fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

But don't compromise. If you can't find any spiritual companion it's better to have no companion at all. If you can't find someone who has got the same spiritual ideals as yourself, stay on your own. (Pause.) And this is very, very difficult because human nature is quite weak. We like some sort of companionship. It's very difficult to remain on your own. It's very difficult to be unpopular and unsociable, and have a reputation as being unsociable and a bad mixer and not very friendly, etc., etc. It's very difficult to be odd-man-out. It's very difficult to be the white crow in the flock with may be all the other normal crows, or black crows, pecking at you from time to time. This is a very difficult state. And sooner or later you may

be tempted to give in and be just like everyone else, just for the sake of a bit of approval, a bit of warmth, a bit of companionship. This is something which probably none of you had to face for some years but there are quite a few people, not only people who are interested in spiritual things but even people interested in creative things, who don't find any sympathy in their environment, who are very much odd-man-out, very much on their own. And the temptation to give in and forget about your ideals and just be like everybody else, that's very, very great sometimes -because after all you are human. (Pause) But the Buddha says don't compromise. Luckily we don't have to compromise because we have got spiritual friends that's a very fortunate state of affairs indeed.

But surely we praise accomplished friends,
choose thou the best or equal friend,
not finding these in loving right,
fare lonely as rhinoceros.

So don't only be joyful as you fare on with your spiritual friends, don't only be mindful but praise your accomplished friend. I wonder what the word for 'accomplished' is... let's have a look at that. (Pause) Yes 'well-endowed friend' (?) 'Surely we praise accomplished friends.' Friends who are endowed with good spiritual qualities. So this is very important too, this question of praise. Very often people are reluctant to praise. We certainly feel in this country that you shouldn't praise someone to their face; well fair enough. But certainly praise him or praise her to other people, to other friends. Don't be backward in your praise. If you are speaking to that particular person, well don't be backward in appreciation and positivity. (Pause.) This whole sort of conception of praise is very important. We should be ready to praise, willing to praise. Sometimes, people will be grudging in their praise - have you ever noticed this? Someone says 'oh you know so and so did something really good, it was really wonderful', say 'Humm, yes, was it?' A very sort of sour grudging kind of way. You are unable to respond heartily and be really pleased and to join in the praises of that [102] person. Of course you have to be able to do it genuinely and honestly. Even when we actually feel it, in some strange way we are reluctant to give expression to that feeling. Have you ever noticed this? So we should praise heartily. This is one of the points that Dale Carnegie makes in that famous book of his. He of course recommends it rather with an ulterior motive I am afraid, but we should do it in a disinterested sort of way. Praise people! Usually we are much more inclined to be critical than to praise. We don't exactly dispraise or denigrate, but we are not very warm or enthusiastic. It's a bit allied to the whole question of thanksgiving that we talked about on some other seminar. It's connected with the whole business of rejoicing in merit. So praise your spiritual friends, speak well of them. In the Sigalovada Sutta this is one of the characteristics of the friend, that he speaks well of you to others. This doesn't mean that he just exaggerates your good qualities, but he has got a genuine regard, a genuine appreciation of you and he speaks that; he speaks of that, expresses that.

___: What does 'not finding these and loving right' - what is meant by 'loving right'?

S: Loving the right, loving what is right and (if I) can see what the original is. (Pause for reference.) If you don't find these, and if you love, and therefore want to do what is right, then 'fare lonely as rhinoceros'. Whereas we might say, well if you don't find friends of this sort, good spiritual friends, then, on principle, out of your love for principle, just carry on on your own. But the Buddha also says 'choose thou the best or equal friends'. If you can associate with someone better than yourself, more developed than yourself, wiser than yourself. If you

can't, at least associate with someone who is on, as it were, the same level as yourself, but not with someone who is inferior. It doesn't necessarily mean simply with someone less developed than you, but making an effort in the same direction. But someone who is not making that sort of effort at all.

___: It's more like with those making an equal effort?

S: Making an equal effort, for the same basic reason.

'Seeing how glittering bangles of gold
Though finely wrought by goldsmith's art
Jangle when twain on arm are set,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

This is a well-known comparison. There is a story, I think it's about a king who was being fanned by a maidservant who had a big feather fan, and she had lots of bangles on her arm, and the noise of the bangles clinking disturbed the king, he wanted to have his afternoon siesta. So he asked her to take off one or two of the bangles, so she did that. But there was still a noise, still a sound - asked her to take off a few more - there was still some sounds. So he asked her to take off one more, so that there was only one bangle left, then there was no sound at all. So the king understood - if you live on your own there is peace. So he at once left his palace and became a monk. They did not waste time in those days! (Laughter.) Just walked straight out. So it is as a reference to that there. 'Seeing how glittering bangles of gold, though finely wrought by goldsmith's art jangle when twain, even just two on arm are set fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

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Sometimes of course there is more jangling when there is just two, that's what is called a relationship! (Laughter.). Anyway, won't say any more about that.

'Bethink thee - thus with others joined,
What worldly talks, what scolds for me,
Seeing this fear lies in the way,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

If you live with other people and it's assuming of course worldly people, worldly in the sense of not having any spiritual aim or object, there is all sorts of unnecessary talk, you know, it just goes on and on. And 'scolds'; you are sure to get criticized or abused, or scolded for this or that. And this will be annoying and troublesome to you, this being presumably that you are not guilty of anything, scolded without reason. 'Seeing this fear lies in the way, fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

___: What is meant by 'fear'?

S: Danger, danger of disturbance.

'Gay pleasures, honeyed, rapturous,
In diverse forms churn up the mind:
Seeing the bane of pleasure's brood,

Fare lonely as rhinoceros. '

The Buddha here says something that is very true, the gay pleasures - however honeyed and rapturous, however sweet and rapturous they may be in different forms, they just churn up the mind, and you really do notice this, that when you are supposed to be having a good time, supposed to be enjoying yourself, you aren't really enjoying yourself, your mind is just churned up. When you are meditating, if it's a good meditation, then you may really be enjoying yourself. Or if you are listening quietly to a good piece of music, or if you are reading a book, absorbed in it, or if you are just talking quietly with friends, well you may then just be enjoying yourself. But what people usually think of as enjoyment is just a churning up of the mind. You just become really disturbed, very restless, do you know the sort of thing I mean? I expect everybody has experienced this at sometime or other, it's a sort of feverishness, it's not a real enjoyment. And this usually comes out of associating with other people who don't have any spiritual ideal. So 'fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

Lokamitra?: What happens when you have some sort of worldly enjoyment but it seems to give you more energy, or energy seems to come from that?

S: But you just have to be quite mindful and quite skilful and use that sort of energy source in a very mindful way.

Lokamitra?: Well, why should it come up if it's sort of sense pleasure, in actual fact you might think you are enjoying yourself, you might think you are enjoying yourself when you are quite bored and when you do go out and enjoy yourself in the world of sensuous pleasures, then it brings a lot of energy.

S: Does it? You have to ask yourself what is actually happening. For instance, it may be a physical activity, suppose you go for a walk in the country, you could say that's a worldly activity, but you do get a certain amount of physical stimulation from that, that [104] leads to a certain mental stimulation, then you might have a better meditation in the evening just because your energies are relatively unblocked, and they are flowing more freely. So you must use those sort of occasions in that way, and keep an eye on them, and make sure you do sort of direct the energy that is aroused in the right sort of way, and also don't deceive yourself.

Lokamitra?: It's certainly true that when the energy does come up it's good to meditate afterwards.

S: But ultimately, when you really get into it, you draw the energy for the meditation from the meditation itself, from within your own mind. But sometimes you do need some sort of external stimulus just as a starter or at least just to unblock yourself and get the energy flowing. So to do that is quite justifiable, but one must be very circumspect and mindful, and make sure that afterwards you are in a truly meditative state and aren't just experiencing a certain sort of physical and mental well being of a very general kind, just because you have had that particular (experience?) - that can happen too. You may sit there feeling all pleased and happy but that isn't necessarily meditation, though it may be on it's own level quite healthy and positive.

Sagaramati: Sometimes I find meditation seems to bring this on itself a bit I mean you start

off feeling - oh, so dull - and then you sit I mean energy comes up, and your mind is like a snowstorm. You feel sort of, you don't feel bad or down or anything like that, you just feel like there is a lot going on, you haven't got that quietened.

S: Usually you have to work through all that disturbance (but obviously it's difficult?), especially if one is living in a city there is so many stimuli. I mean the mind has got different levels, there is a level, relatively superficial, which is all stirred and churned up, and you just have to pass through that into deeper levels, as it were, which are relatively calm and quiet. I think we probably don't realize always the amount of stimuli that we are exposed to living in a city. You certainly notice it if you go away on a solitary retreat in the country, such a difference, such a change. Here you're bombarded all the time, even with just sounds for instance. Sometimes you are in the country and you just can't feel, well how quiet it is, it's almost oppressive, there are no sounds. I noticed this when I was in Finland and we went right up into the woods, north of Helsinki, it was so quiet, even quieter than our countryside here, in this country. I found it in New Zealand too, you know, in certain areas we went through, I mean motoring here and there, completely quiet, completely empty. No one for miles and miles; could not hear a thing. So very often we have to give ourselves time to sink through the level of disturbance into a level of quiet. No doubt the wrong sort of social life just doesn't enable us to do that very easily. So if one is trying to meditate or is trying to lead any sort of spiritual life, you have to be very careful about all these things.

Lokamitra: In your biography...

S: (Interrupting) Oh, dear, I hope I have been living up to my own exhortations! (Laughter.)

Lokamitra: You said that, this was a long time ago of course, that you found that walking and - or doing the amount of walking you were doing - and meditating, were incompatible, at one point anyway. How would you relate that to working and meditating in London, doing [105] anything, say working in Sukhavati or working here or in a job?

S: It does seem that for many people, if not most people, physical activity, especially violent physical activity, does result in a sort of unrefined state within oneself, almost a coarse state which is incompatible with the more refined state of meditation, so that it is very difficult really to meditate very soon after you've been engaged in violent physical activity though you may have been moving about smoothly and quietly and mindfully, that's another matter. If you have been rushing around and doing things very vigorously, even violently for a period, you can't immediately afterwards sit down and meditate. Your whole system is, not exactly disturbed, but the vibrations are much too coarse as it were. Has anyone experienced this sort of thing? ('Yes, yes, hums of acknowledgement.) This is the general Indian belief, not just Buddhist. I certainly found it myself.

Sagaramati: In that case then you'd give yourself time.

S: Time to calm down or quieten down. Talking about this sort of thing at Sukhavati this morning, it may be all right to do certain things. I mean people were asking for instance about alcohol. It may be all right to do certain things, but you have to space them out so that they don't get in the way of other things. For instance, you may not be a complete teetotaler, but if you are not, then you must so arrange your drinking that you don't, say, drink immediately before meditation obviously, because the alcohol will have an effect on your mind which is

different from the sort of effect which is produced by meditation and the mind can't do both things at once, as it were; it can't vibrate on those rather different wavelengths or frequencies at the same time. So if you have decided, yes, I am going to go out and have a drink, all right, but so arrange it that if you are going to meditate afterwards, you've got a good space of time during which the effects of alcohol can wear away. And this is not a question of getting a bit drunk, even, but even, a very small quantity, just almost a thimble full will have a slight effect, and it's better to give that time to wear away. Or if you've been meditating, don't take alcohol too soon afterwards because your mind will be invaded as it were by a quite different sort of vibration, and the conflict of the two will impose a certain amount of strain on your system. So it's not a question, from this point of view, of doing or not doing this or that, but of so organizing your whole life that there isn't any very abrupt transition from one mode of functioning to the other, not any so abrupt transition that your whole system is jarred. It may be a very good thing that you go out and have a vigorous walk, but don't get back from your vigorous walk just a minute before you have got to take a meditation class. There is nothing wrong with the vigorous walk and in the same way there may not be anything wrong, at a certain level anyway, just, you know, a glass of beer or wine or whatever, but fit it in with the overall scheme of things as it were. This is very important and that applies to a number of other things. Music - you might thoroughly enjoy some really good classical music and be really carried away by it but you can't really sit down and meditate immediately afterwards. I mean, they are both good things, but they are not quite compatible, not unless you put a certain space of time between them. So it is very often a question not just of what, but of where and when. And this involves mindfulness. So you have everything more or less worked out - you know what you are doing. May be if you know that you are going to have to meditate in [106] about one hour's time, someone offers you a drink, say 'No, sorry, I am going to meditate'. Or even if someone offers you a cup of tea, if you know that tea has a very stimulating effect and you won't be able to meditate, well, don't take the tea. Whereas if you know a heavy meal is going to make you sleepy, don't take it just before you meditate. Give yourself an hour or so to digest it. But, anyway, we were talking originally about 'honeyed and rapturous pleasures in diverse forms churning the mind.' But there are certain things if one is trying to lead a spiritual life, you know, one should avoid altogether because they are completely disruptive and inimical for it. You won't go on a three-day binge or an orgy or anything of that sort or an all-night party.

___: Even reading newspapers?

S: Even reading newspapers. If you read them too much, and too unmindfully, even these things aren't really very positive. Again it's a question of arrangement. I mean if you have for any reason, or think you have for any reason, to read newspapers, well, assign a definite time for that, assign that time in such a way that the effect of reading that newspaper doesn't extend into other things, where that sort of feeling or idea isn't required. As one's spiritual life gathers momentum, well, there is quite a lot of things you just can't do any more, can't even fit in, you just avoid. And eventually, of course, even the whole of the so-called worldly life, you will have difficulty in fitting in.

'They are a plague, a blain, a sore,
A barb of fear, disease for me!
Seeing this fear in pleasure's brood,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

These are all pleasures in the sense of things that can very easily become sources of attachment. So they are really like a plague, they are like a blain, a sort of wart, a sore, a barb, stuck in the flesh, something fearful and dangerous, a disease. This is rather strong language of course.

'The heat and cold and hunger, thirst,
Wind, sun-beat, sting of gadfly, snake;
Surmounting one and all of these
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

Here we come back to someone who has literally gone forth in the old Indian days, who is a bhikkhu wandering about, so he has to bear and surmount heat and cold, hunger, thirst, wind, sun, the sting of flies, bites of poisonous snakes; it wasn't always an easy life. He really had to rough it sometimes, despite the good climate and all that. Sometimes we are told even the Buddha didn't get any alms food. (Pause.)

'As large and full-grown elephant
Shapely as lotus, leaves the herd
When as he lists for forest haunts,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

According to Indian ideas the elephant is rather a beautiful creature. Rather delicate and dainty. They never think of the elephant as clumsy. In fact the elephant is a very graceful animal. If you see [107] elephants walking and running and playing, you can appreciate that fact. In Indian epic poetry they compare a beautiful woman to an elephant. It doesn't mean she is fat and heavy, it means she has a beautiful slow, swinging gait. That's the sort of point in the comparison.

Lokamitra: They do like their women though quite full (?)

S: Well, yes, but that is not the point of the comparison here, it's the grace and beauty of movement of the elephant, and the way it sort of swings as it walks. So just as that sort of elephant leaves the herd, when he starts longing for the forest, in that sort of way, fare lonely as rhinoceros. There is the story about the elephant who felt very troubled by the pressure of all the other elephants and all that sort of thing, and he just went off on his own, just about the same time as the Buddha, felt in the same way about all the monks and lay disciples and kings and ministers and merchants, thronging about Him, and went off to the same forest as the elephant and they met there and stayed together, and a monkey. And the elephant brought the Buddha water in its trunk and the monkey brought Him honey and in that way they all lived together happily. (Pause.)

Obviously it's very difficult these days to go off on our own indefinitely, but we can certainly go off from time to time. It isn't necessarily reactive, sometimes you really do need to be on your own completely; has any body felt that? (Yes, yes.) You notice in the case of the Buddha; there the Buddha was, leading a very useful life; he was only with monks, and with the lay-disciples, with kings who come to listen to Him and merchants who came to Him to hear his advice. But even so the Buddha himself felt a bit troubled, a bit hemmed in; so he went off to the forest. So it suggests - and this is very important - he went off just like the elephant, that even the Buddha needs to be on his own sometimes; not to speak of other

people who are still struggling. Even the Buddha, just to experience his own Buddhahood, his own enlightenment as it were, just by Himself. To have that full experience of Himself, which is a positive thing, experience of his own enlightened individuality as it were. So everybody needs to do that to experience their own individuality, even though unenlightened. It's as though if you are too much with people for too long at a time, the edges of your own individuality become blurred; you don't really sort of feel yourself any more. It's as though you are a bit sunk into the mass so you have to separate yourself and go off on your own from time to time. There can be a sort of rhythm in that; you can spend part of the day by yourself, an hour or two at least every day completely on your own, or every weekend you can go away for a day or two, or every year you can go away for a whole week or month by yourself. But every now and then, whether at more or less frequent intervals, just experience yourself by yourself completely on your own. You will have a much more positive and healthy basis from which to relate to other people. So one need not necessarily even in the light of that particular Sutta think in terms of a permanent and once and for all indefinite going off on your own without even spiritual friends. But one should certainly think in terms of a periodic - I won't say 'withdrawal', it's really not a withdrawal - but a periodic going off on your own somewhere.

: Bit like an expansion...

S: Yes, even going from your spiritual friends. It's more like an expansion, yes. You don't feel on your own, this is one of the things [108] you notice. You don't feel lonely, because you've got the companionship of your own self. And if you've got that companionship, you can't feel lonely. And if you haven't got it, even though you are with other people, you will feel lonely. You will feel a certain emptiness, which is not filled, which other people can't fill, which you can only fill by your own self, when you experience yourself. So this being by oneself and going off by oneself, going off on one's own, is very, very important. It's as it were the obverse, the positive obverse, of the spiritual companionship. One could even say there are two kinds of spiritual companionship; spiritual companionship with others, and spiritual companionship with one's own self, and one needs both. You can't really have the one without the other in a sense. You must experience yourself by yourself as it were, in isolation, before you can relate to, and experience other individuals who experience themselves. But what you usually have is not just two clear or clear cut individuals relating in a clear clean-cut sort of way, you've just got a couple, or two or three more, sub-individuals, as it were, sort of merged together in a gluey mess with no clear outlines at all. There is no individuality and there is no community. There is just a sort of group, in the not very positive sense. So we need to differentiate ourselves and separate ourselves out from others periodically.

___: How does this fit in with what you were saying earlier on, Bhante, about the artist who was alone in a group of people - presumably he has his individuality and yet he must feel lonely in order to have those people or want to have those people?

S: Yes. Well it would be better if he was completely on his own. I mean, assuming he is strong enough to be on his own. Because sometimes what happens, you may have the capacity to be on your own and experience yourself in a positive sort of way, but since you are with other people and trying to relate to other people, you are distracted from yourself; you can't relate to yourself. You are neither with yourself, nor with other people. So at least if you get away by yourself, you can experience yourself and as it were relate to yourself. But if you remain too much with other people, they don't allow you to relate to them, nor do they

allow you to relate to yourself: you've missed out both ways.

Marichi: I don't understand what those words mean. I know what you are talking about, but I don't understand why you can't relate to yourself nor to them.

S: Well, you know, we started off from the instance of someone, say the artist, who has got some experience of himself, some degree of individuality, though may be it's a bit transitional, not very fully developed. But he is with other people, so other people distract him; they are relating in all sort of silly trivial ways. He is made aware of them, or conscious of them, so he loses contact with his own self.

Marichi: By distraction.

S: Yes, by distraction. He loses contact with himself, he can't experience himself, and this can be felt as very frustrating. So he is not with them because they are not individuals. So, how can he be with them in any true sense? At the same time the fact that he is physically with them, and they are physically distracting him, even mentally distracting him, he can't even be with himself or by himself, or experience himself, which perhaps he could be if he were just left alone, or if he just went off by himself somewhere. Sometimes you [109] feel this. So you are not able to be with other people - or they don't allow you to be with them - by virtue of the very way that they are. At the same time, because you are physically in their presence and talking to them and so on, you are distracted from your own self, your own true being as it were. So that's why I said, you miss out or lose out both ways.

Dhammadinna: Do you think it's a good idea sometimes if someone is very involved in the Friends that they are treating as a group, that they should be moved away completely, if you can see that happening in someone?

S: That's quite difficult because, if they are away from the group, away from the Friends which they have just been regarding as a group, what is going to sustain them away from the group? So long as they are in contact with the group, or what they think is the group, if some members of what they think is the group, are in fact individuals, eventually something of that will come through, they will have some contact with those individuals and then they will start getting some glimmering of an idea that this is not just a group and then, they will be relating to it, then, less and less as a group. And if you sort of send them away from the group before they've got that, well there is nothing to sustain them, because the group itself isn't there. May be there is the memory of the group, or the hope of rejoining the group, but they could feel rejected, or they could feel so much the need of some sort of group contact, they just go off somewhere else. So one has to be very careful about that.

Lokamitra: At the same time people who do relate in that way can be very draining indeed.

S: Well you must not have too many of them around.

Lokamitra: (They) take up so much energy.

S: You must make it very clear, or as clear as you can, what it really is all about. But for people to want to belong to a group or to enjoy a group is not in itself an unhealthy or bad thing, but super-imposed upon the group there must be the spiritual community and sooner or

later people must find their way from the group to the spiritual community. (Pause.) So we have to understand all these things, it's very important to understand 'what is the group'; 'what is the place of the group'; 'what is the spiritual community'; 'what is the function of the spiritual community'; 'What is the individual'? And I think it is inevitable that many people will be attracted to the Friends to begin with, as to a group, and we can't blame them for that and if they, in a way, it's a quite sort of healthy and positive step. Because as a group, or in its aspect as a group, the Friends is now, a relatively positive and healthy collection of people. So others will certainly be attracted. Though what is important is that within the context of the group, the spiritual activities go on (and that) the spiritual community on another level is also present and that there is sort of free access from the group to the spiritual community.

Dhammadinna: Sometimes it seems to go on for a long time, and that change just does not seem to be happening. Quite difficult to know what is best.

S: Obviously the Friends can't be loaded down too much by people who are devoted to it as a group or a very nice sort of club.

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Some people quite cheerfully say, as it were, 'put up with Buddhism and all that', even sit through the meditation. I've seen this sometimes in the very early days, just for the sake of companionship. You can certainly put up with this for a while but after it's gone on for too long, it does become a bit frustrating.

Lokamitra: I think the sort of people Dhammadinna is talking about, they would perhaps like to appreciate the spiritual-community aspect of it, but just cannot. They just do not see that at all.

S: That is true. There does seem to be just a few people who are, as it were, quite literally blind. Who just don't see! You may explain it and...

Dhammadinna: I think they think they see.

S: Humm! Yes, quite! They may think they see it, but you can tell that in fact they don't. That they understand all your words in a completely different way. You may say 'spiritual fellowship' but they take that and cannot but take that as just the companionship of the group. And they genuinely think that they've understood what is spiritual fellowship and that that is spiritual fellowship. But they just are sort of insensitive to that other dimension of the term that you are trying to put across.

Marichi: (Are they going to be frustrated by a lack of that feeling or perhaps they don't feel that... ?)

S: And they can even do a lot, you know, they can even devote themselves a lot, even sacrifice a lot, give a lot, but still have no inkling of the spiritual community as such or no inkling of individual spiritual development. As we become more and more successful and positive, as a group on that level, we will have to watch this more and more, because then we will become very attractive to people of that kind, and quite understandably so.

Lokamitra: One of the things we have to be very careful about is in the communities I think,

in sort of, who joins them, because it can just be disastrous ... such a waste of energy if communities are tied down with these sort of people.

S: Well, each community itself just has to watch this. (Pause.)

'Tis not for him who loves the crowd
To reach to temporal release:
Word of sun's kinsman heeding right,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

Who is the sun's kinsman? the 'ditya bandhu'? It's a very archaic name for the Buddha, because the Sakya lineage from which he was descended was traditionally supposed to be affiliated to the sun, All Indian princes were supposed to be descended either from the sun or the moon. So he is called the Kinsman of the Sun; rather like the Egyptian pharaohs. The son of the sun. So, it's not for the one who loves the crowd, the group, to attain to temporal release sam ya vimutti - no one really knows what that means, it only occurs in a few places. Sometimes it's translated as 'temporary release', sometimes as 'release', or emancipation or freedom attained within time. But we don't really know what the term means -but it's interesting that it's used here. Could even mean 'timely' But one of the texts does represent a certain bhikkhu - Godika - as falling [111] away from this 'samaya vimutti'; so the term does mean perhaps 'temporary emancipation' but in that sense if it is emancipation, how can it be 'temporary'? The whole point of emancipation is that it isn't temporary, so perhaps it's emancipation in another sense, not the ultimate emancipation. It's very difficult to say.

Marichi: Is it release from time, or is it not (?)

S: No, it does not mean that grammatically; we need not bother about it too much.

___: Release from the perception of time or cause and effect?

S: Perhaps it is that, but then bearing in mind that other text, it's a temporary thing, whereas release in the more ultimate sense is equivalent to Nirvana itself. Anyway that's just a subsidiary point here, the general meaning is clear. Nirvana is not for the one who loves the crowd. So if you follow the advice of the Buddha, go forth. Does anyone want to stop for a cup of tea since we are half way through? It's up to you.

___: (Inaudible voices.)

S: All right we go on.

'Leaving the vanities of view,
Right method won, the way obtained:
'I know! No other is my guide!
Fare lonely as rhinoceros. '

This is also quite important. There is a bit of a paraphrase here; let me look at the text. 'Ditthivisukani', vanities of view will do - view in the sense of wrong views, michaditthis. Leaving aside all michaditthis, having won or obtained the method (niya), the way obtained. Then one thinks 'I know!' 'no other is my guide.' That's a bit of a paraphrase. It's more like

'knowledge has arisen in me, I am not one who depends upon another. Literally, 'I am not the man of another.' I am not somebody else's. That is to say 'I am my own guide'. There is a bit of a pun here in the Pali, it says 'uppannānaṃ mhi anānāyā' - knowledge has arisen for me, I am not anybody else's, I am independent, I know for my own self. I don't need a guide. It's my own experience, it's direct. So in a way, this is the ultimate independence. Ultimately it's not just a question of going off on your own, cutting off, cutting loose. It's a question of knowing for yourself, experiencing for yourself, in a much more ultimate sense. Knowing the truth for yourself. Knowing Enlightenment for yourself. So leaving behind all wrong views, following and practising the right method, the right way of life, attaining the path, the path in the higher transcendental sense. Then you come to the realization that you know yourself, you're not dependent upon any other for your knowledge. It's based on your own experience, your own realization. (Pause.) So obviously this is one of the most important verses in the whole Sutta.

___: Bhante, could you summarize that again?

S: Having left behind all the various wrong views, having obtained and practised the right method, the right way of life, and having attained the path - in the sense of the higher transcendental path - [112] that is to say the path of the stream-entrant, once-returner and so on, up to the path even of the Arahant, one then experiences Nirvana, experiences enlightenment for oneself, so that then one can say 'I know', I am not dependent for my knowledge on anybody else, it's real knowledge based on experience, not mere faith. So this is the real independence. I mean the other independence which consists in going forth, whether literally from one's own, or from various unskillful states, that's all preliminary, but this is the real independence where one isn't dependent for one's knowledge on what anybody else says, when one knows directly by virtue of one's own personal experience. This of course is very much emphasized in early Buddhism. It's emphasized also very much in the Lankavatara Sutta. So one could summarize the Sutta so far from these two points of view by saying, that one goes forth by oneself, and as a result of that going forth by oneself, literally and metaphorically, one knows for oneself. One is not dependent upon anybody else. One is neither dependent upon others through attachment, nor is one even dependent upon others for one's knowledge of the path, or one's knowledge of the goal. One experiences directly for one's own self. This is very much the emphasis of early Buddhism, as well as of later texts like the Lankavatara. I think I mentioned in those talks on Zen, those five talks on Zen in 'The Essence of Zen', that sometimes we ought to take stock and try to see how much we know from our own direct experience. How much we only know as it were from hearsay. And usually we find that what we know from our personal experience or observation even is very, very limited. It's mostly hearsay, or what we've read, or what we've just sort of cogitated or ex-cogitated, even speculated, or wondered or imagined, but not what we really know. What we really know is very, very limited.

Padmaraja: Are you using 'know' in...

S: 'Know' in the sense of knowledge based on experience, direct experience. For instance we say we know that the Buddha lived in 500 BC, but in what sense do we 'know' that? It's a quite different sense from what we know that if you put your finger into the fire it will burn - we know that right enough. We can verify it any time you like! But in what sense do we 'know' that the Buddha lived 500 BC?

Siddhiratna: Would you say that you might know that the Buddha lived 500 years ago, if you experienced your own Buddha nature, and that would be (the fullest) sense of knowing? And that's the only possible way of knowing.

S: Even that's a bit different, because then you would know what Buddhahood was, so you would know that it was possible for a Buddha to have lived 500 years ago because you would know from your own experience that such an experience as that - i.e. Buddhahood - was possible. But even that wouldn't enable you to know, on the empirical plane, that actually 500 years ago, 500 BC, a Buddha had lived. Perhaps, we can't 'know' that, in the absolute sense, it's only a reasonable belief based on certain evidence which can never be absolutely conclusive. A lot of our so-called knowledge is of that kind. Probably all our knowledge of history is of that kind.

___: Any knowledge that deals with history, or past history, or even future in ... (?)

S: There can be no absolute knowledge, it's more or less conclusive knowledge, more or less but never absolutely conclusive.

[113]

Marichi: Does that mean knowledge about physical things?

S: Well about your own direct personal experience even with regard to physical things there is the question of the interpretation of experience, and that interpretation is going on all the time. When you see something you say 'Oh, that's a cube', but you don't see a cube. That's your interpretation, that it's a cube, based upon previous tactile experiences. That when you go up to something that looks like what you now call a 'cube', you can get a certain kind of experience. You can go as it were all the way round it, which justifies you now in interpreting that particular experience as being the experience of, or vision of, a cube. But you don't see a cube, do you? You don't see all the way around it, do you? What you see is two dimensional.

Marichi: You can put your arms all the way around it.

S: But you can infer that it's a cube. You don't see that it is a cube; you infer that on the grounds of previous experience. So even in the case of sense experience you can't say that it's a matter of knowledge because it's a matter of inference. But inner experience - you can say it's the basis of actual knowledge. I mean you know if something hurts, you know that. In that sense knowledge is a sort of direct awareness.

___: That's why being aware

S: Right. You know yourself, and that is real knowledge. And if you know that you are angry, well that's real knowledge, that's real awareness; or if you know that you are sad, or know that you are happy this is a much more real kind of knowledge because it's not possible to contradict it.

___: Does the question of how angry or how hurt come into it?

S: Well there can be degrees but basically it's a question of comparing your own experience, that is to say your present experience with your past experience - or I am more happy today

than I was yesterday. I mean it's very difficult to compare your happiness with somebody else's. If somebody else is happy reading a book, you are happy playing a record. But is it possible to say 'well, I am more happy than he is'? He might feel because you might feel well 'reading a book does not give you much happiness', so I must be more happy because I am playing a record. But he might think just the opposite. How can you get much happiness playing a record, obviously it's a book that gives you more happiness. How are you going to tell, is there a sort of calculus, a way of reckoning? Can one person's happiness be compared with the happiness of another person?

Dhammadinna: Didn't the Buddha compare his happiness with another person?

S: He did actually but he gave an objective criterion.

Dhammadinna: How long did he sit? (Laughter.)

S: Yes, so you can argue in that way. (?)

___: What did he do?

S: The Buddha asked the king; but of course it's a question of happiness within himself, the happiness of each, within himself. The king [114] claimed that he was happier than the Buddha because he thought he had all those possessions that the Buddha didn't have. I mean, like Dhaniya, only on a grand-scale. Dhaniya thought that the Buddha couldn't be happy - he didn't have all the things that Dhaniya had. But what is the proof that your real happiness is within yourself. So if you can just remain completely absorbed within yourself, well presumably you are happy, if you don't have to be looking outside for things. But inasmuch as the Buddha didn't need to go looking outside whereas the king did, the Buddha was happier than the king, in the sense of having deeper experience and also may be perhaps enjoyment of Himself. You know that when you don't feel very happy, you go looking for distraction. So therefore if you see someone looking for distraction you can infer that he is not happy. And if you are not looking for distraction, you can say that you are happy. So if you see that, if you know that you are happy, you see that he is distracted, you can justifiably infer that you are more happy than he is, or even that you are happy and he is not happy. But if he at the same time as you is absorbed in something, which at least for the time being is causing him to be absorbed, well you can't say whether he is more happy than you, or less happy than you; you don't know, not so long as he is absorbed in that particular thing - in the same way as you are.

: Absorbed in his distractions!

S: Not necessarily distractions. Though you could say it was distracting if it was something external. But even if two people were sitting meditating, one might last out longer than the other. So presumably they'd be - physical difficulties aside - they'd be more deeply absorbed and therefore more happy. But of course basically it's not question of sitting but just of being more happier within yourself. The most you can say is that someone seems happier within himself because he doesn't seem to be searching for distractions. And sometimes one can, as it were, know sort of analogically about other people through studying and observing oneself. You know within yourself, if you are happy and contented, you don't go looking for distractions. But if you are not happy and contented you do that. So if you see somebody else who seems to be looking for distraction, you can infer, and therefore you know inferentially,

that he is not happy.

Sagaramati: Distractions are not actions. I mean somebody might (S: (Interrupting) In the Buddhist sense) (think) well, I'll do this now because I am feeling happy.

S: An action you could say in this sense is an expression of what you are feeling, whereas a distraction is an attempt to do something so as to give yourself a feeling - to fill up the emptiness. Sometimes it is quite good just to remain without doing anything without distracting yourself and experiencing the emptiness and the boredom. And quite soon sometimes it will pass away and you will have a much more positive experience. And this often happens on a solitary retreat. You might even be quite bored at first. Anyone experienced this?

Voices: (Acknowledgements.) Yes! Yes!

S: But when you have settled down and got used to yourself as it were and made friends with yourself, you don't get bored at all. You are experiencing yourself all the time. So it's as though the further we go away from our own direct experience, the less certain becomes our [115] knowledge; you can say that, at least you can say that. And the closer we come to our own personal experience, our own direct experience, the more certain our knowledge becomes. So basically, knowledge is a sort of awareness.

'Gone greed, gone guile, gone thirst, gone grudge,
And winnowed all delusions, faults,
Wantless in all the world become.'

This presumably describes the post-enlightenment state. After one does truly and fully know for oneself.

'Shun thou the evil friend who sees no goal
Convinced in crooked ways
Serve not at will the wanton one
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

(Wanton one is unmindful one, heedless one.) Here we seem to be going back a bit to the time when you are still trying to follow the path.

'Seek for thy friend the listener.'

(Bahussuta?) the one who has heard much; the one who has listened much to the teaching, the Dharma. 'Dharma imbued'- the one who possesses the Dharma, is endowed with the Dharma; 'lucid'. According to the text, lucid in explanation. Explaining things, expounding things clearly, 'and great'. Not only great but sublime, noble, pre-eminent and so on.

'Knowing the needs, expelling doubt
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.

'Play, pleasures, mirth and worldly joys,
be done with these and heed them not;

Aloof from pomp, and speaking truth
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

There should be a comma here otherwise it suggests that you should be aloof from speaking truth, but it isn't that; it's aloof from pomp, and speaking truth fare lonely as rhinoceros.
(Transcript altered accordingly.)

'Son, wife and father, mother, wealth,
The things wealth brings, the ties of kin:
Leaving these pleasures one and all,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

'They're but bonds and brief their joys,
And few their sweets and more their ills,
Hooks in the throat! - thus skowing, sure,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

Hooks in the throat; what does this mean do you think? What sort of comparison is at the back of the Buddha's mind here?

: False speech.

S: Fish - the fish swallows the bait, you know, the hook concealed. In the same way you catch hold of pleasures, you swallow them down, but there is a hook lurking, concealed, that sticks in your throat.

: But it reminds me of the honey on the razor's edge.

[116]

S: Yes, right.

___: Honey on the what?

S: Razor's edge.

___: (Inaudible.)

S: The rose surrounded by thorns. But some people know this and think 'never mind, never mind.' (Laughter.) I want that rose, never mind the thorns. I want the honey, I don't care if I cut my mouth on the razor.

Marichi: (Inaudible.) the risk?

S: Oh well not until may be you really do burn your fingers so to speak (to change the metaphor.)

'Snap thou the fetters as the snare
By river denizens is broke
As fire to waste comes back no more

Fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

Once the fire has burned the jungle, as it were, and everything consumed, the fire won't come back, there is nothing more left to burn. So in the same way go forth and don't come back.

'With downcast eyes, not loitering,
With guarded senses, warded thoughts,
With mind that festers not, nor burns,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

'With downcast eyes' this is a description of the good monk. 'Warded thoughts, with mind that festers not, nor burns; fare lonely as rhinoceros.' This is the importance of mindfulness as one goes about. This is very necessary in a place like London where you are surrounded by all sorts of tempting and stimulating advertisements. And if you travel the underground you probably should go round with downcast eyes and not loitering. (Laughter) With guarded senses and warded thoughts otherwise your mind can really be taken. Someone came to see me, well just popped into my room in fact this morning, and I had a Radio Times lying by the side of my chair and on the front cover of the Radio Times was three scantily clad maidens. So the young man who sort of popped into my room was sort of horrified to notice, he confessed this, that as soon as he sat down his eyes automatically went there and he at once checked himself and he realized what had happened, he realized just how difficult it is when we are surrounded by these things. So 'with downcast eyes, not loitering; with guarded senses, warded thoughts.' This is one of the things that travellers say they notice about the communist countries. There may be certain rather unpleasant features in life in communist countries but at least you are not bombarded by these consumer oriented advertisements. Vajrabodhi mentioned this - when he came back from China as soon as he arrived in the free West he really was struck by this fact, all these advertisements. They are completely absent - that's quite a thought.

'Shed thou householders finery,
As coral tree its leaves in fall:
And going forth in yellow clad,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

[117]

There is a certain symbolism the yellow robe. Apparently criminals on their way to execution were clad in yellow. So why do you think the monks wore yellow then? Because he (?) realized he was as it were being hailed along to execution, that life was very short, his next instant could be his last; just as the criminal (who) is going to be executed knows he is only going to live a few more minutes. So in the same way, the monk realizes the shortness of life, the impermanence of life, he realizes he has got, as it were, only a few more minutes. He is like a condemned criminal all the time - so he doesn't waste his time. The Tibetan texts are full of exhortations and reminders of this sort. One can of course overdo this and be aware of the passage of time and the shortness of life in a neurotic sort of way and just become very hasty and bothered and flustered, not knowing really what to do and may be not even do anything. So one has to watch this and just bear in mind the shortness of life in a sober sort of way. Some again say that the yellow robe is yellow because yellow or ochre is the colour of the earth and you have to remember that from the earth you came and to the earth you go back; it's the same sort of idea.

'Crave not for tastes, but free of greed,
Moving with measured step from house
To house, support of none, none's thrall,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

This is of course a description of the begging monk. 'Crave not for tastes.' He doesn't bother what sort of food he gets - whether it's sweet or sour, hot or plain - he doesn't care, he is free from greed and he moves with measured step, with a very sober sort of way, from house to house. He doesn't look after anybody, and nobody looks after him. He just gets this, a handful of food, from the house in which he goes for begging.

'Rid of the mind's five obstacles,
Void of all stains whate'er, thy trust
In none, with love and hate cut out,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros. '

Just a few words on this 'thy trust in none.' The word for 'trust' here - Anissita - is really more like 'dependence'; when you depend upon something, you trust it. You get the meaning? Like when you sit down in a chair, you have the trust in that chair, that it won't give way beneath you. So it's a sort of trust. It's trust in this sense, you depend on the chair not giving way beneath you, therefore you sit on it. But suppose the chair does give way? So, worldly things are like that. You sit down on them as it were, or settle down in them with trust, thinking you can depend upon them, but you can't, because they are worldly things, because they are impermanent, because they change. So you settle down in relationships with other people like that. You might depend on or have trust in your parents in that sort of way. Taking it for granted your parent are always going to be there. You are always going to be able to fall back on them. But one day you will lose them, one day they will die; that then is a terrible experience for you. You feel completely let down. But you may be let down in this way by anything in which you place this sort of trust. (Pause.) So he does not place his trust in anybody; that does not mean he doesn't believe anybody but he does not regard anybody as, as it were, absolute.

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: (I read a poem about that somewhere (... must?))

S: It isn't not trusting them in the ordinary sense, but not depending on them, thinking that they will always be there. Not being emotionally dependant on them in other words. When you are emotionally dependent on someone you think as it were 'this is for good', 'this is for ever'. Just like the child thinks or the baby thinks that 'mother will always be there', or that mother is always there, because the baby doesn't even have any time sense. Mother is always there. So when the child, a small baby, is deprived of mother, its mother is not there! He feels totally deprived. Not that mother has gone away for a little while, she'll soon be back, in another minute, no, mother is not there, is a total loss, as it were, total deprivation. Because the child is totally dependent in the present, has got no time sense. So when we regress to a sort of infantile state and become emotionally dependant on other people this is how we feel when we lose that sort of support. We feel a sort of total deprivation because we've depended in that sort of infantile way. We don't feel 'oh, they've gone off for a while', or 'they've gone off with somebody else for a while'; we feel a total deprivation. Therefore we get very disturbed emotionally. Do you see what I mean? (hums, ah's of acknowledgement .)

So it's this sort of dependence, this sort of trust that we should leave behind.

'And turn thy back on joys and pains,
Delights and sorrows known of old;
And gaining poise and calm, and cleansed,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

'And turn thy back on joys and pains, delights and sorrows known of old.' This 'known of old' is quite important. It's very difficult for someone to give up the old. 'Delights and sorrows known of old', you know that's interesting. You might think it's difficult giving up delights but you give up the sorrows quite happily, but no! Sometimes you cling on to past sorrows, past regrets; you won't let them go, the past grudges - you won't let them go either. You hang on to them just as much as you hang on to the past delights. Maybe after twenty years you are still brooding upon something that somebody did, that somebody said - you won't let go!

___: A bit like the wheel - you've been round things so many times, and...

S: Yes, right, just want to keep it going. The old familiar wheel, it's a nice old wheel, we've got used to it, you know every nook and corner of it, you don't want to part with it.

Marichi: It's like nostalgia, isn't it?

S: Anyway, I was listening to the radio the other day, apparently there is quite a thing going on at the moment - nostalgia for the sixties, (pause), already! There is one or two friends I know who feel quite nostalgic for the early days of the Movement. (Laughter) They say - when there were not so many classes, you know... (Laughter) with nice little classes, you know, just once a week. There is some technical term here 'and gaining poise and calm'; 'samatha', that's the poise, or it could be the calm, is the higher dhyana states. In other words it's not clear whether 'poise, translates 'samatha' or 'upasantha' or vice versa, it could be either. [119] (But) 'samatha' in Pali, and 'upasantha'; and 'samatha' is the technical term of all the higher dhyana experiences, experiences of higher states of consciousness. 'Upasantha' is calm of mind, peace of mind in a very general sense. And 'cleansed' is a word which comes up very often in the older Pali texts, (visuddham) pure, cleansed, clean, washed.

'Astir to win the yondmost goal,
Not lax in thought, no sloth in ways,
Strong in the onset, steadfast, firm
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

This obviously describes the state of one who is really making a great effort to gain the goal, to win enlightenment. 'Astir', all his energy is aroused; 'not lax in thought', not slothful in his ways; 'strong in the onset', really as it were attacking it; 'steadfast, firm, fare lonely as rhinoceros.' These are some of the more as it were heroic qualities that one requires.

___: That would be akin to what Lama Govinda calls the vajra determination.

S: Yes, yes. 'Araddhaviriyo', with energy aroused, with vigour aroused; it's a very strong term. One which comes again and again in the Pali scriptures, 'araddhaviriyo', one whose energy is stirred up, whose energy is aroused; the energy of course being 'virya'. (Pause)

'Paramatthapattiya', this is translated as 'astir to win the yondmost goal', it could be the supreme goal. With one's energy aroused so as to attain the supreme-goal, i.e. nirvana or enlightenment. (Pause.)

'Neglect thou not to muse apart,
'Mid things by Dharma faring aye,
Alive to all becomings' bane,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

'Muse', is to practise meditation; this is a rather inadequate translation of 'dhyana'. Not neglecting to meditate, and attain higher states of consciousness, separately on one's own. Faring amidst all worldly things by means of the Dharma. 'Alive to all becomings bane' - fully realizing the danger and misery of all forms of conditioned existence, 'fare lonely as rhinoceros'. 'All becomings' means all forms of conditioned existences or conditioned existence.

'Earnest, resolved for craving's end,
Listener, alert, not hesitant,
Striver, assured, with Dharma summed,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros. '

There are several technical terms here. Yes, 'earnest' is 'appamatto', which means not heedless, heedful in other words, mindful, aware. A striving for the destruction of craving or thirst; mindful, not hesitant; one who listens, one who takes in the Dharma through the ears; one who is mindful. And a very interesting term: 'samkhatadhammo' which is translated as 'with Dharma summed', literally counted, enumerated. This perhaps ties up with 'Shankya' - which is the name of a school of Indian philosophy dating back to the days before the Buddha, founded by the sage Kapila, who also founded Kapilavastu, the town where the Buddha was born, or near which he was born. Shankya means simply 'counting' in the sense of knowledge because by counting things you come to know them, as it were. So with the Dharma counted, with [120] the Dharma known, or summed up, you could say, or accounted for even. 'Assured' is 'niyato' which means - it's almost like destined, not in the sense of destiny coming upon you from the outside but you've made the effort, the result is sure to come. So you are assured of the result, you are destined to receive the result because you've made the effort.

'Like lion fearful not of sounds,
Like wind not caught within a net,
Like lotus not by water soiled,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

This is a more metaphorical or rather, not only metaphorical but a verse with similes. 'The lion fearful not of sounds.' Traditionally the lion is supposed to be completely fearless. When the other creatures, when the other beasts in the jungle hear the lion's roar they all fall silent in terror. But when the lion hears their sound, their roars, then he doesn't care at all. And the Buddha is like that we are told. When the Buddha roars his lion roar, his simhanada, all other creatures, all the other wise men of his day, they fall silent; they don't dare to make a sound. But the Buddha when he hears them has no fear, he doesn't mind what they say. Be like that, be like the lion not afraid of any of the sounds of the jungle. Be like the wind not caught

within a net. How can you catch the wind in a net? The wind just passes through! The worldly things should be just like that - they can't catch you, they can't trap you. They just blow straight through. 'Like lotus not by water soiled.' There we are, the Pundarika! - the white lotus, you know, growing in the midst of the mud, the mire; not soiled, pure, immaculate, unstained. Be like that, a very, very well known comparison - one of the best of all. Just bloom like the lotus in the midst of the mud of the world. That's how you should feel, pure, immaculate, not stained. This is related to experiencing yourself. Do you see the connection? (Sounds of acknowledgement.) It's also connected with the 4th jhana, the 4th Dhyana, the 4th state of higher consciousness. Wherein after taking a bath - this is the comparison - you've wrapped yourself in a white sheet. So this symbolizes your insulation by the jhana experience from contact with the world, as it were; you are insulated, cut off, in a very positive sense. You are pure, you are not affected, your positivity is so strong that it, or rather you, affect the surroundings; your surroundings don't affect you. So that is what is meant by blooming like the lotus. You experience your own individuality to a very intense degree. So this sort of aloofness, this sort of blooming like the lotus in the midst of the mire, means experiencing oneself, experiencing one's own individuality so intensely or to such an intensity, that you are just not affected by external things. You must be very careful not to interpret this, as it were, moralistically, 'remaining all pure', not in that sort of way. But, your own positivity is so great that outside influences just bounce off you as it were.

'As lion, mighty-jawed and king
Of beasts, fares conquering, so thou;
Taking thy bed and seat remote,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

So if you conquer everybody in a metaphorical sense of course. 'Taking thy bed and seat remote.' This is a sort of idiom for staying on one's own - just experiencing your own self. Being just like the lotus in other words.

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'Poise, amity, ruth, and release
Pursue, and timely sympathy;
At odds with none in all the world,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

'Poise, amity, ruth, and release Pursue, and timely sympathy;' - these are the four Brahma Viharas of course, plus vimutti, or emancipation - in other words, equanimity, friendliness, compassion, and sympathetic joy. They are rather differently translated here, plus emancipation or vimutti. So pursue these. 'At odds with none in all the world, fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

'And rid of passion, error, hate,
The fetters having snapped in twain,
Fearless whenas life ebbs away,
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.'

'Folk serve and follow with an aim:
Friends who seek naught are scarce to-day:
Men, wise in selfish aims, are foul:

Fare lonely as rhinoceros."

It seems to end on a slightly disillusioned note. People associate you with aims of their own, with selfish motives, to get something out of you. Friends who don't seek anything from you, whose friendship is completely unselfish, they are very rare nowadays. 'Men are wise only in selfish aims' due to which they are not really pure in the motives. So 'Fare lonely as rhinoceros.' The final warning as it were. (Pause.) So there we are.

So having gone through it verse by verse, what sort of an impression do you get now? Anything different?

___: My main impression is that there doesn't seem to be any trace of a bodhisattva ideal at all in it.

S: Hum, no. It's as though you can't afford to be a bodhisattva yet. There is of course reference to the four Brahma Viharas, and the four Brahma Viharas are, according to the Mahayana, the seed as it were out of which the bodhisattva ideal, or rather the bodhicitta grows.

___: Could you say that again.

S: According to the Mahayana, the four Brahma Viharas, that is to say the friendliness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity, these are the seeds out of which the bodhicitta grows. So you can say the seed of the Bodhisattva Ideal is there, but you have to be so cautious. Of course you can say the bodhisattva ideal isn't mentioned here, for purely historical reasons, because the bodhisattva ideal developed at a later stage of Buddhist thought, but this is not a real answer because the bodhisattva ideal represents a genuine aspect of spiritual life and it's that that one is really asking about. So why is that - genuine aspect of spiritual life, the altruistic aspect, as it were, here, the transcendently altruistic aspect, not mentioned here specifically? The reason seems to be that here the emphasis is on the development of one's own true individuality, and if the bodhisattva ideal - to use that term - is introduced prematurely, there is the great danger of it being used as a rationalization for attachment. You say for instance 'Oh, I want to remain in contact with these beings, I want to help them, etc, etc. There is a very nice example [122] of this in the film I saw the other night, some of you have seen it also; the 'One flew over the Cuckoo's nest', do you remember? Who has seen this apart from Siddhiratna? Do you remember the theme with nurse Rackett and the doctors, and they were discussing whether the hero - what was his name? McMurphy - having, he'd just got into some trouble and disgraced himself, whether he should go back where he came from as it were, or whether they should keep him on. So what does nurse Rackett say? 'Oh it would be such a pity, you know, to send him back. We must keep him here, I'd like to keep him here, and help him.' So there is no bodhisattva ideal there. She is pretending that she wants to help him; she does she wants to keep him there so that she can get her own back; because a sort of feud developed between them. So this is the sort of language that people use to disguise that. You use the language of helping but really you just want to get even. So in the same way you use the language of the bodhisattva ideal, but actually it's to cover up your own attachment. So this sort of aspect is not to be introduced prematurely. Yes, certainly develop the Brahma Viharas - these are highly positive states - it's good for you to develop them. And sooner or later, if you carry on, and if you are a true individual in the highest sense, then yes the bodhisattva ideal will develop quite naturally. But

don't introduce it prematurely. Even Milarepa says that; he says 'don't worry about helping living beings, there will always be living beings to help! (Laughter.) You just concentrate on perfecting yourself so that you really can help them. I mean, it's very difficult helping others; it's very difficult to avoid doing them harm. Perhaps at the beginning we should concentrate more on that.

___: How about things like courses, introducing the bodhisattva ideal (?)

S: I think one has to be quite careful but certainly start off with the Eightfold Path lectures. Of course we mustn't overlook the fact that some people can be genuinely drawn to the bodhisattva ideal at a very early stage and genuinely respond to it, and feel a genuine altruism, but actually, to embody that in practice however genuinely you may feel it, that is a very different matter. And to be able to really embody it in practice, you need lots of discipline, as it were - a lot of practice of your own.

___: Would that tie up with the other bit we were talking about 'I know no other is my guide', I mean you would have to reach that stage before you can start being a bodhisattva.

S: Certainly before you start becoming a bodhisattva in the full sense. Of course do what you can to help people, but be careful about regarding yourself as a helper or sort of 'saviour' of other people - to the neglect of really working on your own self and developing yourself individually.

Lokamitra: It seems to be just so basic and, forget about ideals, all the time, just really concentrating on not fooling oneself where one is at.

S: Yes. Just as in this matter of companionship, I mean, if necessary just cut yourself off completely, don't compromise. If you can't find good friends, don't have any friends, that's better. Just be your own best friend. Help others if you get the chance, but to the best of your ability and according to your likes, but don't fool yourself that you are a bodhisattva, not even a baby one.' (Laughter.) [123] Then one's own blundering efforts to help others is a very different thing from the skill in means of a bodhisattva. That's not to say you can't help them, but you are much more likely to be able to help them if you do it in an unpretentious way thinking more in terms of your own development as it were. It's good for me that I serve other people. I am grateful that they give me as it were the opportunity to do that. Not that they all look at me 'I am being a great bodhisattva and helping others, look what I am doing for them'; that's not a good attitude at all. Just be grateful for the opportunity to do something to help people at least in a small way. But no sort of bodhisattva stunt as it were. (Pause.) I think even in the Mahayana in the later stages of its development in India, the bodhisattva ideal did tend to get rather vulgarized, and treated a bit lightly, or very lightly even. Sometimes even in India (it) was used as a rationalization for attachment. So we should be very careful not to do that. So whenever you are tempted to do that sort of thing, well just remember the rhinoceros; catch hold of the rhino's horn as it were. This is not quite to say - as some of the Theravadins say 'you can't help others at all until you've finished helping yourself.' No, the two are much more closely interconnected than that. You can help yourself by helping others too. You can help others by helping yourself. If you help yourself, if you are in a positive mental state, positive mood, if you are radiating positive emotions, that helps others. You don't even have to try, it helps them that way. If at the same time you are trying to help others in a quite ordinary down-to-earth way, well that helps you too. So you can't altogether separate the two

but be careful not to think of oneself as practising the bodhisattva ideal in a grandiose sort of way.

___: You mean as having a mission?

S: Yes, that too, to the neglect of, as I said, of any actual work on oneself. One can even say, to the extent that you are working on yourself, you are a bodhisattva. You can't but help people as you come into contact with them and they come into contact with you.

Lokamitra: It seems very tied up with a coincidence of wills, I have seen it like that - to the extent that one's will coincides with the will, if you like, of the Order or whatever. One will be doing as much as one can to, not only help oneself but also to help the Order and whatever the Order is doing and so on.

S: I've also spoken about this in some seminar or other, in this way think in terms of the bodhicitta. I mean, well, don't think, 'Well here am I being a bodhisattva, or even trying to be a bodhisattva' but there is the bodhicitta, as it were. I should just let the bodhicitta sort of manifest through me or work through me, just by being receptive and open and sincere, and aware and so on. If I am that, well the bodhicitta will function through me without my having to take conscious thought of it. I mean conscious thought in a sort of, as it were, egoistic fashion. One can't really consciously adopt the bodhisattva ideal. It's a sort of travesty of the ideal to try to do that. It's trying to be humble. So this particular approach as in the Sutta of the Rhinoceros may seem very austere and very bare, and in some respects perhaps to some people at least, a bit uninspiring, a bit bleak. But it does represent a very necessary sort of clearing of the ground for action. Getting a lot of rubbish out of the way.

___: I find it very inspiring.

[124]

S: Good.

___: So do I!

S: Well, that's fine.

Lokamitra: I think it's very difficult for people to relate to the bodhisattva ideal, I mean to experientially relate to it, but they can relate to themselves very much, and I think this is why these are so good.

S: I must say when I started reading Buddhist literature I found these particular suttas as bit dull, I must confess. But I was myself, you know, much more inspired by the bodhisattva ideal. But looking back on it, I can't help thinking that may be that was all a little suspect! As the years went by I certainly started appreciating the Sutta Nipata more and more. I think when I was in Kalimpong I read the Sutta Nipata more than any other Pali text. I think it was almost my favourite one. But in my very early days I must confess I sort of, I skipped through the Sutta of the Snake and Rhinoceros rather quickly, but not now I am glad to say.

Marichi: There was something in the Three Jewels (?) about the bodhisattva ideal, and even there it was about losing oneself (?) experience oneself fully.

S: To give a very mundane analogy: if you feel happy, even in an ordinary mundane sense, what is the effect of that on your behaviour with other people? How do you behave with other people if you yourself feel really happy?

: Positively.

S: Positively, yes. So if you yourself are a real individual how will you behave with others? If you are free from attachment and you're really kind, and really affectionate and ... how will you behave with others? You won't need to make it into an ideal how you should behave with others. (Pause.) And if you are happy you communicate happily. If you are enlightened, you communicate enlightenment. You can't help doing it. You know if the light is a light it can't help shining. It's ridiculous to say well, you know, first you get your light and then you make it shine! To be a light is to shine. Though you could almost say - though Buddhist tradition does not quite say this - but you can almost say, to be an arahant is to be a bodhisattva, provided your arahant idealism isn't a narrow or shrunken one as it is to some extent in some forms of the Hinayana.

: Then, and if you are an arahant then you are enlightened aren't you?

S: Well, taking it in that sense, yes.

: The ideal may become shrunken but the experience itself ...

S: Yes, the expression of the ideal in a certain tradition may become shrunken, but the ideal itself in its integrity, that of course doesn't become shrunken. (Pause.)

Any further point anyone wants to raise? I think it is very important, how does this compare with the previous two suttas.

[125]

___: Different, very different.

S: Even from the first?

___: (Inaudible)

S: There is here this emphasis on the distinction between the good and the bad company, which wasn't there in the first sutta.

Dhammadinna: The first one is mainly about states of mind, isn't it? This one is about external ...

S: ... things as well.

___: It's relating to something external. (Unclear)

S: Yes. Here one is sort of definitely going forth, whereas in the Sutta of the Snake it's as though one has already gone forth. One is already a bhikkhu faring from place to place. It's the individual going forth from the collective. (Pause.)

Sagaramati: The thing that you were saying before about the individual (?) like (for instance) negative emotions (being) more collective than positive ones, would that be right?

S: I haven't thought of it that way but you are probably right.

___: Negative emotions are, well they are more primitive, they belong to a lower evolution.

S: Yes. Well in, according to say the Abhidharma there are certain mental states that are simply not found in the 'rupavatara' or the 'arupavatara'; so there are more people in the ('kamavatara?'), so the states of consciousness which one finds there, one could say are collective. The higher you go the fewer living beings there are to share those states; the less collective they become, the more individual. (Pause.) So when you are sort of plunged into the group or the mass or the crowd you feel sort of dispersed, scattered, but in a sense, you are in abeyance. It's as though the collective consciousness of crowds, consciousness of crowd spirit, just takes over so to that extent it's negative, or to that extent the negative is the collective. You know, the crowd goes 'wild with excitement', with rage or fear.

Dhammadinna: Lawrence writes about this in his novel (Kangaroo?), isn't it? (About the conflict of being alone in a crowd? Could not be bothered?) It's quite strong.

Siddhiratna: Do you think there is any situation where a group ... regardless, well not exactly regardless of size, but anywhere where a group has a positive aspect or positive functioning?

S: I think it sometimes does have when your individuality, or your so-called individuality, has been a bit strained and as it were self-conscious in the rather negative (sense), in other words a bit alienated. Sometimes then sort of plunging back into the group provided the group is in a not so very negative state as it were, can be a bit like just going to sleep or having a drink or two. At least you get a bit of a rest, a bit of relaxation. So obviously you have to do [126] do it mindfully or mindfully at least while you are in it, if you are actually in it you are not mindful. If you are mindful you are not in the crowd even though other people are all around. But sometimes you can have, as it were, strained a bit too much and you need to restore the balance. But sometimes you can do that (sometimes) by going to sleep or just relaxing, having an easy time, or sometimes just mixing with the crowd, especially if it's a sort of cheerful happy crowd, it can be a relaxation. So in that sense it can have a pleasant effect. It also depends on the size of the crowd, what kind of crowd, you know, what brought it together, whether it's a football match or an execution or whatever. (Laughter.) Sometimes it's not a bad thing to experience a sort of basic human solidarity with other people. That can have a sort of positive effect.

Siddhiratna: I was thinking in terms of people I meet at college in the sense in which they talk about crowds or especially groups, and that they seem to talk about it in terms of group-forming to collectively make some action which will benefit them or even people they may represent in a sort of democratic way.

S: I think people's thinking about what is a group is just not clear and the distinction between a group and what we call, for want of a better term, a spiritual community, i.e. an association of individuals, is just not made.

Siddhiratna: Oh yes, yes. I suppose we can have people forming, people as individuals

realizing the necessity of something and they are forming therefore, forming a collective... but when you get a group which is brought together without any awareness of why, then it becomes a mob rather than a positive (thing), that would be a waste of time.

S: Sometimes even people who have come together with a fair degree of consciousness lose that in the course of coming together. You notice when people join a demonstration, they might start off with a quite clear idea what it is they are joining and why, but in the course of the demonstration everybody gets so worked up, so carried away, the mob spirit sort of is aroused, that they just, as it were, forget themselves and do all sorts of extraordinary things that they wished they hadn't done afterwards.

___: Do you think they may misinterpret. I am not sure what you mean by 'mob spirit', I think I've come across this experience at (?)

S: You mean when you are sort of possessed, you don't really know what you are doing?

___: Or misinterpreted the mob-spirit as something good or positive in some way.

S: Well, sometimes it is interpreted as something good and positive when, you know, perhaps, it isn't.

___: It's a sort of feeling of mob strength, and it's a sensation of the strength that ...

S: Yes, that's in a way quite pleasing. You are invaded by, or taken over by that strength as it were. You are possessed by that, like [127] being possessed by demons, and experience that strength as yours or you (?), so that can be in a way a very pleasing sensation, you feel very powerful, very potent, in a way that you normally don't. This is the great strength, quite literally, of many political movements; this was the strength of Nazism, coming together in great arenas and all that kind of thing, when you are completely taken over by something. You don't really see much of it in this country; people tend to be a bit more sober. Anybody experienced anything like this, any great mass meeting?

___: I think pop festivals can be arresting experiences.

S: Football.

Dhammadinna: ... being in a football crowd once, it was quite incredible.

S: When I was in New York I happened to go through certain streets where the St. Patrick's Day procession and celebration was going on; that was really quite terrible. I was trying to get to some museum or art gallery. I did not realize it was St Patrick's Day. It was really quite horrible. Having had that experience I can understand what's going on in Northern Ireland, really. It was so horrible - the feeling and atmosphere and people, very, very unpleasant, the New York Irish, the brutality, and crudeness, and hardness, quite extraordinary, the drunkenness, fighting. Really very negative, nasty vibrations, quite, well, horrific. (?)

Padmapani: I picked that up when I went up to Ally Pally, guru Maharari, about a year and half ago. I went in there and I was carried on a wave of emotion. One person grabbed one arm, one person grabbed the other arm and waved it up in the air. There was a sort of

staircase, a fat guy sitting on the top. I only found out later it was him, guru Maharaji. It was very odd, to sort of just be taken over (it was like) a dance. I couldn't understand, I couldn't really relate.

S: You are supposed to be dancing with joy? Yes?

Padmapani: Hum, yeah! I was just, it was just like some form of machinery.

S: It seems that very often nowadays that people tend to alternate between submergence in some sort of mass emotion, even mass hysteria, and on the other hand a very strained and alienated self-consciousness which isn't a real individuality, or a real awareness at all.

___: (?) they are following a system and they are quite definite about this.

S: But they do react very often to the mindless mass.

___: There seems to be more interest in things like group therapy, problem orientation (?)

S: I think we should certainly have a, as it were, certain level for which one quite rightly experiences a sort of almost group warmth, if you know what I mean, but, you are not completely identified with that. It's rather like a mountain; lower down, yes, it's sort of quite warm and there is lots of quite lush vegetation but the mountain rises higher than that. So there can be a certain level of one's being in which one does experience what I call a sense of solidarity [128] with other human beings, even with other living things. But you rise up out of the midst of that, or your individuality, your true self, as it were, rises up out of the midst of that, your own real individuality; you are not confined to that other level.

___: I think that's quite an important stage.

S: Yes, it can be a quite important level.

___: (In one's) emotional stability.

S: Or basic emotional experience.

Voices: Yes.

S: But the point is really individuality does not mean alienation. You are, as it were, not attached to, you are not dependent on the group, but you are not out of touch with it. You are not cut off from it in the sense of being alienated from it, and I think that's quite important. (Pause.)

Padmapani: One can move up the mountain, also down into the bottom of the mountain.

S: Into the jungle (?).

So this again comes back to the middle path. The middle path is not an easy thing to follow; it's quite tricky. You don't want to be submerged in the mass. But you don't want to be a sort of split-off individual, an alienated pseudo-individual, with a very strained sort of

self-consciousness.

Marichi: (To?) move in and out of both would be quite quite (?)

S: I don't know about 'move in and out of' ...

Marichi: You have a choice, you are not cut off; you could in fact be (?)

S: If one sees it as a sort of skilful and helpful thing just to, as it were, for the time being, may be just for an evening, submerge yourself in the warmth of the group, well, one should be able to do that, knowing one will emerge from it also. But not be so alienated from the group that you cut yourself off from all warmth and normal human companionship, which doesn't mean of course you should make it a basis for attachment. But that's only possible if in addition to that you have the more individual development at the same time. In other words, in becoming spiritual, or beginning to become spiritual, you don't cease to be human in the ordinary every day sense. I think that's quite important, you don't become inhuman.

Marichi: Yes, you can't really be spiritual if you are inhuman.

S: Some spiritual people, even some religious people, are just very inhuman in a very odd sort of way.

Lokamitra: There are one or two people around, even in the Order, who are so alienated from the group of things that they just cannot make any progress at all, or really move at all, and (pause) in fact a big chunk (is) missing out of the way they relate to the [129] world and so on.

S: Perhaps it has a lot to do with their own childhood. You know, one's experience of the world, especially one's parents ... One of the things I notice at Sukhavati, there seems to be a very positive experience of one another by people. I noticed this when I arrived from Norfolk. It was as though people were very much in contact, in communication with one another, in a quite subtle sort of way. You could see the little sort of 'vibes' just going through the air without anyone saying very much. But it's as though there was a network of these little 'Vibes' all around, though not much was being said usually. Certainly not any loud or vigorous conversation, just a quite quiet intermittent ... Did you feel that?

___: It's a lovely atmosphere to come into I find, I find, I really get a lot of energy from just (coming into it).

S: May be we should just end on that note then. (Pause.)

(Transcriber's Note: We now come to a different Sutta.)

S: Who is going to read it then? Come on, get some practice in.

___: This is Bharadvaja - Farmer Bharadvaja

'Thus have I heard. Once, when the Master was staying among the Magadhans near South Hill at the brahman village of Ekanala, the brahman farmer Bharadvaja, had in yoke five hundred

ploughs, it being sowing time.

Now early one morning the Master, having dressed and taking bowl and robe, approached the farmer at work and it was the time of food distribution; the Master drew near and stood at one side.

And the farmer Bharadvaja saw the Master standing there for alms and said to him: 'Recluse, I plough and I sow; and when I have ploughed and sown, I eat! You, recluse, should plough and sow too; for, having done so, you may eat.'

'Brahman I too plough and sow - and when I have ploughed and sown I eat.'

'But we see not Master Gotama's yoke and plough, not his ploughshare, goad, nor oxen! Yet Master Gotama speaks so ...

Then the farmer addressed the Master thus in verse:

Bharadvaja

'Thou dost profess to be a ploughman, yet
Thy ploughing see we not;
Tell us who ask what ploughing's thine? Of that
We fain would learn from thee.'

[130]

The Master

'Faith is the seed, austerity the rain,
Wisdom my yoke and plough;
My pole is modesty, mind is the strap,
And I have mindfulness
For share and goad. Warded in act and word,
In eating temperate,
With truth I clear the weeds; and full of bliss
Is my deliverance.
To a security from moil doth draw
Vigour, my team in yoke:
And on it goes, nor turns it back; it goes
Where is no suffering.
And thuswise is this ploughing ploughed, and thence
There comes the deathless fruit;
And whoso hath this ploughing ploughed, set free
Is he from every ill.'

Then the farmer Bharadvaja caused a massive copper bowl to be filled with rice milk and offered it to the Master, saying: 'Let Master Gotama eat this rice milk! A ploughman indeed is the Master since he ploughs a ploughing for deathless fruit.'

The Master

'Not mine t' enjoy fare won from chanting hymns;
'Tis not the thing for seers, O Brahmana!
Fare won from chanting hymns the Wake reject;
Where Dharma reigns, this, brahman, is the rule.

'Nay, thou must offer other food and drink
To a great rishi wholly consummate,
The cankerless, untroubled man of calm:
Sure field is that for merit-seeking man.'

Bharadvaja:

'Then Master Gotama, to whom shall I give this rice

The Master

'Brahman, I see no one in the world with its devas, Maras and Brahmas, or on earth with its
recluses and godly men, devas and men by whom that milk rice, if eaten, could be wholly
digested, save by the Man-thus-come or by his disciple. Wherefore, brahman, cast that rice
milk where there is but little green grass, or throw it into water without creatures.'

And the brahman poured the rice milk into water where there were no creatures.

And the rice milk, thrown into the water, seethed and hissed and sent forth steam and smoke.
Just as a ploughshare, heated the livelong day when thrown into water seethes and hisses, and
sends forth steam and smoke, even so that rice-milk seethed and hissed and sent forth steam
and smoke.'

And farmer Bharadvaja alarmed with hair standing on end approached and fell with his head
at the Master's feet and cried: 'It's amazing, Master Gautama, it's marvellous, Master
Gautama; just as a man might set up a thing overturned, reveal the hidden, show the way to
the blind, bring a lamp into the darkness, so that those with eyes could see forms, even thus
Dhamma has been declared in many a way by Master Gautama. Lo! I go to Master Gautama
for refuge, to Dhamma, and to the Order of the monks, I would go forth (nigh), I would obtain
full acceptance.'

And brahmin Bharadvaja went forth nigh to the Master, and obtained full acceptance.

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Now, not long after his acceptance, the Venerable Bharadvaja dwelling alone, apart, earnest,
ardent, resolute, e'rlong entered and abode in that supreme end of the godly life, for the goal
of which clansmen's sons rightly go forth from home to homelessness, and by his own
knowledge did he realize it here and now. And he knew: birth is destroyed, lived is the godly
life, done is what had to be done; there is no more of this state. And the venerable Bharadvaja
became a man of worth.

[132]

S: So in a way this particular Sutta isn't unlike the second one, The Dhaniya Sutta. But, at the same time, there is a difference as it were. Do you see the difference? I mean the general structure, the general attitude. Well in each case you've got a dialogue, though here the dialogue is embedded in a narrative. But there is a difference in the nature of the dialogue. In the case of Dhaniya and the Buddha there is a sort of direct opposition, or direct contradiction, do you remember? But in the case of Bharadvaja there isn't this direct contradiction, there is more a relationship of analogy. When he was speaking to Dhaniya, the Buddha said: 'I have no cows.' I mean, Dhaniya had boasted about his cows, etc, about his wife. So the Buddha's response is I have no cows, I have no wife, but here he does not as it were confront or contradict so brutally, so abruptly. He does not say 'I don't cultivate at all' when Bharadvaja says: 'I am a cultivator.' He does not say 'I am not a cultivator.' He says 'I am a cultivator of a different sort' But in a way, he makes it easier for Bharadrāja. Do you see the difference? (Pause.) But the result is more or less the same.

Siddhiratna: In the first one he was likening farming or grazing to the sort of negative aspect - passion, greed, craving, etc. (In) this one he is talking about more positive aspects in terms of cultivating mindfulness etc. So it's the same kind of symbolism but a different emphasis.

S: Yes, formerly in the case of Dhaniya there was a direct negation of the worldly life. But here the worldly life is, as it were, linked up with the spiritual life, and the worldly life and the spiritual life have a sort of analogical relationship. Or one can say the worldly life supplies the spiritual life with its metaphors. In a way it's a sort of question of communication. In the Dhaniya Sutta the Buddha negates everything that Dhaniya says. But in the case of the Bharadvaja Sutta, the Buddha as it were uses Bharadvaja's language but he uses it in his own way. He doesn't speak of ordinary ploughing, he speaks of the spiritual ploughing. Whereas in the Dhaniya Sutta he refuses to speak in those sort of terms at all. So it's rather like the difference between what in Western mysticism is called the negative way and the positive way. In the negative way you negate - in order to arrive at the spiritual; you negate the mundane, the worldly. But in the positive way, the affirmative, you try to arrive at the spiritual by affirming the worldly in its highest and most refined possible sense. So if you adopt the first way, you say: 'there is no such thing as ploughing in the spiritual life. I have no oxen, I've no field, no possession(s)', but you if you adopt the other, more positive method, you say 'yes, I have a field, but it's a different kind of field. I am a cultivator but I am a different kind of cultivator, a better cultivator, I am a more spiritual cultivator, a better cultivator. I am more a spiritual cultivator, or I am a cultivator in the spiritual sense. So there is a difference of approach as it were between these two Suttas in this sort of way though the Buddha is speaking to the same sort of person and really basically saying much the same sort of thing but the approach is very different.

Marichi: Would the approach be modified because he is talking to a brahmin...?

S: Maybe. But we are not told Dhaniya wasn't a Brahmin. Very likely he was not because if the person is a brahmin it's usually indicated. [133] But he is clearly leading much the same sort of life as Dhaniya, with the exception that he is probably even richer. 'Once when the Master was staying among the Magadhans' - that's the present state of Bihar, 'near Southill at the brahman village of Ekanala. The brahman, farmer Bharadvaja had in yoke five hundred ploughs it being sowing time.' It seems as though the Brahmins originally came down from North-Western India with the invading Aryans, and they were the chanters of hymns and the performers of sacrifices, the performers of rites and ceremonies in general. And they had a

great deal of influence with these invading Aryan people, with the leaders of the Aryan tribes in particular. So as the Aryans settled then these chieftaincies and kingdoms were built up. The Brahmins also rose to a position of influence. In fact for quite a while there was a sort of competition between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas as to who should be most pro-eminent in society - who should have the highest place, the Brahmins or the Kshatriyas, the priests or the landowners and the rulers, and in the Buddha's days this dispute, this conflict even, was still going on. So many of these Brahmins were very wealthy and very influential. It often happened that the kings donated vast tracts of land to the Brahmins, gave them whole villages and there were special Brahmin settlements where only Brahmins lived. And they lived off the land that had been donated by the kings. And they were often given many, many cows for the performance of sacrifices. That is, as fees for the performance of sacrifices. You paid the Brahmin in cows, not in money. Money wasn't much in circulation then anyway. So in the Pali scriptures we get this picture of Brahmin settlements here and there. You get this even now in India, some villages are made up entirely of Brahmins. So even though the Brahmin is not supposed to till the soil, he is only supposed to devote himself to studying the Vedic hymns, learning them by heart, teaching his pupils, performing sacrifices etc, even though he is supposed to live only in this way, nonetheless many Brahmins did not, or at least they cultivated their fields and they ploughed and they sowed and so on, in addition. So this is very much the sort of picture you get here, the Buddha clearly has been travelling from place to place in Magadha; he is in Bihar and he is staying on the outskirts of a Brahmin village. Perhaps he's put up overnight with somebody, someone's shed or he might have stayed at the foot of a tree, and of course it's springtime, sowing time. So there is this quite influential and wealthy local brahmin, Bharadvaja, and he clearly has a great deal of land and he is ploughing with 500 ploughs. Each one no doubt drawn by a pair of oxen; that means a 1000 oxen. So he is ploughing a lot of land, no doubt there are lots of people working for him. Each yoke of oxen requires one man, so there are 500 men. No doubt there are all sorts of arrangements with regard to feeding them towards either feeding them before they start work or feeding them at the end of the day or even feeding them in between. Since the Buddha is, as it were, begging for food, may be it's the morning meal before they start work. But anyway there is a big food distribution going on to all the workmen. So you can just imagine the scene. They have cooked the rice and the curries & dhal-food was the same in those days - in great, what do you call them, vats, almost. And probably this is done out in the open air just as they do it today. People are being supplied with food. So the Buddha turns up, and he stands as it were just on the outskirts of this scene with his begging bowl. This is the sort of thing that happens, it's early morning it says. So, the Buddha didn't say anything, that wasn't his practice, he didn't ask for alms as some of the followers of other schools did. He just stood there with his bowl. And clearly he was expecting, as it were, to be included in the food distribution. [134] So the farmer Bharadvaja apparently didn't like that. The Brahmins very often were quite hostile to the Shramanas, not only the non-Vedic ones, but even the Vedic shramanas. They didn't like that sort of institution, they preferred the married householder, rite and ceremony performing-type of life, rooted in one spot, with fields and cows and all that kind of thing. So, he said rather sharply to the Buddha 'Recluse, shramana, I plough and I sow, and when I have ploughed and sown, I eat. You, recluse, should plough and sow too for having done so, you may eat.' In other words he is saying, if you want to eat you should work, if you don't work, well you shouldn't eat. Be like me, I work, then I eat, so you also should work first, then eat, not depend upon other people. So he is, as it were, rejecting this whole ethos of the Bhikkhu life. But what does the Buddha say? He says 'Brahmin, I too plough and sow, and when I have Ploughed and sown, I eat.' So the Brahmin is rather surprised at this, he says 'but we see not Master Gotama's yoke and plough, nor his plough-share, goad nor oxen, yet Master Gotama

speaks so.' He seems to know who he is, by the way, he addresses Him by name. Perhaps the news of the Buddha's arrival has travelled around the village. He might have just spent the night there beforehand. So 'then the farmer addressed the Master thus in verse.'

'Thou dost profess to be a ploughman, yet thou ploughing see we not. Tell us who ask what ploughing's thine, of that we fain would learn from thee.'

Then the Buddha says this very important verse. I'll read it in English first, then I'll let you see how it sounds in Pali.

'Faith is the seed, austerity the rain, wisdom my yoke, and plough. My pole is modesty, mind is the strap and I have mindfulness for share and goad. Ordered in act and word, in eating temperate, with truth I clear the weeds, and full of bliss is my deliverance. To a security from moil doth draw vigour. My team in yoke, and on it goes, nor turns its back. It goes where there is no suffering, and thus wise is the ploughing ploughed and thence there comes the deathless fruit and whoso has this ploughing ploughed, set free is he from every ill.'

'Kassako patijanasi, na ca passama te kasim
kasin no pucchito bruhi, yatha janemu te kasim.' 1
'Saddha bijam, tapo vutthi, panna me yuganangalam,
hiri isa, mano yottam, sati me phalapacanam. 2
Kayagutto vacigutto ahare udare yato
saccam karomi niddanam, soraccam me pamocanam, 3
viriyam me dhuradhorayham, yogakkhemadhivahanam
gacchati anivattantam, yattha gantva na socati. 4
Evam esa kasi kattha, sa hoti amatapphala:
etaw kasim kasitvana sabbadukkha pamuccati'ti. 5

(Transcriber's note: verse 1 is not quoted by Bhante but I have included it here.)

It sounds quite different, doesn't it? It's much more vigorous, not, you know, like that (Marichi, interrupting: it's very heroic sort of thing), very heroic, yes.

So if we could really translate that into English in that sort of way, it would be very, very impressive. Anyway, let's go into the [135] meaning of this more closely because of a whole lot of teaching and quite a few important points to be considered. First of all, there is this very first utterance: 'Faith is the seed' 'Saddha bijam'. Saddha or shradda is the bija or the seed. But it's the seed which the Buddha is using in His ploughing. So, first of all, what does this whole business of ploughing represent, ploughing as the Buddha is talking about it? It's the whole spiritual life, it's the whole Process of the higher evolution that's the ploughing that he is talking about. So, 'Saddha bijam' - faith is the seed. In this context what is meant by saying that faith is the seed of the spiritual life, faith is the seed of the higher evolution? In what sort of sense is this said?

: Well it can only grow, progress, if there is faith there in the beginning.

S: Yes, there is not plant without the seed. There is no development of the spiritual life, no development of the higher evolution without faith. So what is faith? What does one mean by 'faith'? What does one not mean by 'faith'?

: Doesn't faith mean sureness through one's own experience? I am trying to remember your definition of faith.

S: Yes. But if, so far, you don't have any experience of the spiritual life, then what is faith? Suppose you are starting completely from scratch - may be the brahmin Bharadvaja was a comparatively virtuous person. But supposing you are someone like Angulimala who's got a whole lot of misdeeds to his credit or rather his debit, who starts completely from scratch as it were. So it can't be experience, this faith, because it's the beginning, it's what precedes experience presumably, so it can't be experience. So what is it?

: It's a sort of openness to the teaching.

S: It's a sort of openness to the teaching, yes. It certainly includes openness; perhaps you could also say sensitivity.

Voices: ... arising of the bodhicitta?

S: Yes, but that would be very much further on, that would be much more advanced.

Siddhiratna: Can I ask why (I know we haven't actually answered the question yet) but why in fact he chooses faith rather than, say, rational reasoning as the seed, of the spiritual life?

S: But that is bound up with what faith is, isn't it?

: ... Yes.

S: Sometimes there are other texts where the Buddha represents Himself and others as starting out as a result of a process of rational reflection. For instance there is a passage, I think it's in the Majjhima Nikaya where the Buddha represents himself as reflecting that 'I am a conditioned thing and I am in pursuit of things which are conditioned. Now suppose I was to, myself being conditioned, suppose I was to go in search of that which is unconditioned'. There is not anything there said here about faith, though we could [136] say it is implied because where would you get the idea, as it were, about the unconditioned from? You have no experience of the unconditioned. So it's that sort of openness to the idea of it first, before you experience it. But is it just an idea? Is it openness merely to an idea in a sense of an abstract concept?

___: Is it more something like inspiration, that there is some emotional involvement, a feeling for...

S: It's a feeling for, you know, before you have actually experienced that thing.

___: The possibility, or potential or something (like that)?

S: You could say you feel it because you do have the potentiality within you.

Padmapani: It could almost be based on the fact that you have a feeling of wanting to develop or whatever, or you have faith because you experience suffering although you might not actually experience a suffering. You are experiencing it, your feelings want something better!

S: Yes, right, yes. It's a sort of feeling for something you don't as yet experience but at least you know that what you do experience isn't the object of that sort of feeling, it's something else, you don't know what; it's a sort of 'X' factor. So, it's, you know, faith in that sense, it's a sort of openness to that 'X' factor, or even more than openness it's a feeling for it, even though you don't as yet know what it is. At least you know what it isn't, you know where it's not to be found, even if you don't know where it is to be found.

Lokamitra: It's a very dynamic thing though because it motivates one to work towards that.

S: Yes. There is also quite a number of other passages in the Pali Suttas where someone is represented as having the faith, first of all, that there are, in the world beings who have realized the truth. In other words, there are in the world more highly evolved beings than himself. This is regarded as very important, and there is a sort of object or content of faith. And also, that there is such a thing as the law of Karma, that if you perform a certain action, there will be an effect of that action on your mind, on your character, on your life in the future. So very often, the would-be follower of the spiritual path is represented as having these two faiths or these two beliefs, that there are in the world beings more highly evolved than himself, and two, that there is a sort of law, if you like, a sort of feeling, you believe, that there is higher possibility, that there are higher forms of existence. There are, as it were, enlightened beings. Even though you aren't an enlightened being yourself, may be you have not seen an enlightened being yourself but the fact that you could have that capacity within you causes you to be not only open to but even to have some sort of feeling for that kind of higher being and therefore to have faith in the existence in that kind of higher being. And in the same way with regard to the law governing the whole process of evolution or higher evolution - spiritual life. Do you see the point?

[137]

: Could you say a bit more about the Buddhist view of Karma.

S: Well that would be a bit of a sidetrack, wouldn't it! No, that would keep us here the whole week! (Laughter.)

But here it means, when one speaks in this connection, it's Karma in the broadest sense; not that one simply performs an action and that's that. But that what you do, has its repercussions in terms of your own life and character and experience. You modify your own character through your actions. They aren't just sort of external to you so that they don't matter, they don't have any effect on you, any influence on you. Your actions make up your character and your being. And they are modifying it all the time. You are what you do. (Pause.) So if you want to attain a certain type of being, you have to perform a certain type of action.

Siddhiratna: I was going to ask that even the idea that you may have that there are more evolved beings in the world around you - but I can't ... why is that? Why should that prompt you into going out to find them as it were? I am not sure that - how faith would work in that way, or if that's strong enough in fact to do that. It's like Marichi says the possibility you've got to see, the possibility of becoming like them to want to make you be prompted to go out and find them. I mean, to be aware they might be there does not seem a sufficient reason for making you want to go out and find (them).

S: It's not even a question of going out and finding them. But just being confident that, or just

believing or feeling, if you like, that there are such beings. Not that you are actually saying, that in such and such place, there are such beings. The expression uses that 'there are in the world', or as we would say, that there exist, or if you like, it is possible that there exist, not as a mere abstract possibility but something which is within the bounds of possibility, something that is a practical possibility.

Siddhiratna: There has to be that practical possibility otherwise it is just an abstract thought, I mean...

S: Yes. It's a living possibility. So as I said in many of these texts, the person who is about to set out on the spiritual path, especially one who is about to leave home, and go forth, is described as having this sort of faith; faith that there are such beings as Buddhas, Arahants, and so on, more evolved beings and, two, that there is such a thing as the law of Karma in accordance with which spiritual development is possible.

Lokamitra: In a way you can't develop without those two...

S: In other words, the ideal and the path. It's as though you have a sort of sense that there is some higher goal to attain, for you as a human being, and you have a sort of sense that there is a definite path. Or not even just a path, it's more basic than that, it is as though the nature of human life is so constituted, or even the universe is so constituted, that it is possible for you to attain that. There is a law at work in your own mind and in the universe, which supports your effort to realize that, and that law is the law of Karma. You feel within yourself that's the goal and you feel within yourself the possibility of getting there. It isn't very, sort of, clearly and consciously formulated. (Pause.) I was reading the other day the life of Handel. This might give an analogy from music. Handel was brought up in a completely unmusical [138] not to say anti-musical atmosphere. His father wanted him to be a lawyer. But as soon as the child Handel was put down in front of an organ, I think it was, he seemed to know all about it. He seemed to know that there was such a thing as music, even though he had never encountered it. So you could say he had as it were 'faith' that there was such a thing as music, without as it were looking for that, though he didn't know what it was. He only had some sort of feeling within himself, which afterwards he understood to be a feeling for music. It's rather like that; you may not have heard of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, you might not even have heard about Buddhism, but you have some sort of feeling within yourself, of that kind. Some sort of sympathy or some sort of harmony for that mode of existence, though you can't define it or describe it as yet. So, in that way, 'faith is the seed'.

___: He used to carry on after that. My grandma used to have a picture of him going down at night to play the piano when everybody had gone. He saw that he had to feed it with that, that knowledge, and was fed by that knowledge.

S: Yes, right, yes.

Padmapani: What could be the difference between when it's like when you, you imagine that there is something there which you haven't actually broken into, or you haven't actually got that feel, you just see it in your vision and you know 'Ah, yes, it's there', and it's always there, and when you're actually on the path, the spiritual path, and you're actually treading that path of your aspirations.

S: Well it's not as though the seed is there, then it produces a shoot and then the seed is no longer there. In a way, the seed is there all the time - the shoot in a way is a seed because it gives birth to an even bigger shoot and then to a stem and a stalk. So that principle applies all the way along. All the time you are sensitive to, or have a feeling for something bigger that lies ahead. Even if your experience is quite considerable it's still a seed in relation to what is yet to come. (Pause) So 'faith is the seed'. I think that this raises also, really some quite important points. I was having an odd sort of train of thought some weeks ago in connection with of all subjects, abortion. I was thinking about this quite seriously, (it all links up, don't worry), I was thinking about this quite seriously because, from a Buddhist point of view, abortion obviously is a form of 'panatipata'; yes a form of taking life. And it is considered to be a taking of human life. You probably know there has been quite a bit of discussion whether if you commit foeticide you are killing a human being or not. But, from a philosophical point of view at least, it is thus seen that a human being is a human being at all stages of development. I think I mentioned sometime ago that I saw in a feature article in, I think, the Sunday Times, some colour photographs of the embryo in a very early stage of development. I think it was only a few weeks say in the case of early pictures. It was surprising how human it was at that stage. Now, unless you've got something which is human, it can't develop even, into a human being. Do you see what I mean? In other words the human being is a human being from the beginning. You can say the human being is a human being from the instant of conception. It's a human being. Now of course I was carrying this a bit further because in a way it doesn't quite concern us at the moment, but which is nonetheless interesting. In the same sort of way that you can say that the embryo is a human being; in the same way you can say [139] that the human being is a Buddha. Because just as the full humanity is as it were implicit in the embryo so the full Buddhahood is implicit in the human being. Even though, yes, admittedly effort is required to actualize that. It isn't a natural spontaneous process; you have to help the process along, very much so.

Marichi: It's an implicit Buddha.

S: It's an implicit - I don't like to use the sort of language that 'Oh, you are the Buddha now!' as you sit there, well, you are not any more than the embryo is the human being. But the embryo, well at least one can say, of the embryo, that the human being is implicit in it. And in the same way the Buddha is implicit in the human being. So from this point of view also we can say that in the seed is implicit as it were the whole process of subsequent development. So in this seed of faith is implicit the whole process of subsequent development.

If you have got faith, then at least in seed, in embryonic form, you have got everything. What you've got to do is to water it. And this is what the Buddha says immediately afterwards. 'Saddha bijam, tapo vutthi' 'faith is the seed, austerity the rain'. So this raises the question of course of what is meant by austerity, 'tapo'. But anyway may be we can go on to that in a minute, after we've finished with faith. So you get the idea now what is meant by faith. It's as it were your own intuition of your own possibilities. You have a feeling for what you can be, and you have a feeling for that higher state as it were in general existing even in other beings, though not necessarily so, perhaps in your age there are no more highly developed beings but you nevertheless have that sort of feeling for that state. In other words you have that faith, you have that seed. So to have that sort of faith in a way is a natural thing for a human being. How can you not have it, in a way, if you don't or appear not to, it's because it's been stifled, or you have been subjected to the wrong sort of educational process, or there are too many current miccadithis about.

Sagaramati: And even it has go a mundane analogy. Someone wants to be an actor; (?) be an actor but he can become one if he puts the necessary effort into it.

S: There are enough examples from history that, even if someone has been very, very strongly discouraged, like Handel was discouraged by his father, still the urge is so strong that usually the person persists. The family might not want you to become a musician or an actor or a painter or something of that sort, but you can't help it, you've got such a strong impulsion in that direction, such a strong urge. A seed has been so definitely planted. I mean, we don't always know how, may be it does come from a previous life, we don't always know.

___: It seems the worst enemy to that is cynicism; like cynicism is the seed (?)

S: Cynicism, yes. (Pause.) It's as though the corollary of what I was saying before, just to jump back for a minute, just as in the same way if you kill an embryo you are killing a human being, you could say if you're killing a human being, you are killing a Buddha. So faith is not only the seed but in a way faith is everything because the seed is everything. It's just a [140] question of time and nourishment and cultivation. But in as much as you are a human being, in a sense the seed is always there, you are the seed, you, yourself, just the seed of something higher. So all right what about 'tapo', 'tapo vutthi'. 'Tapas' is the rain. The relationship between rain and seed is obvious. So what is the relationship between 'tapas' and 'saddha', or what is 'tapas' first. We have talked about this before; anyone remember?

___: Something to do with heat, isn't it?

S: It's something to do with heat. It's from the root 'TAP', meaning to burn, or to glow, originally in a quite literal sense. For instance if you say the sun burns, shines, glows; 'tapati' is the verb that you will use; it's used in the Dhammapada in that sort of way. So to shine, to burn, to glow, to be fiery, but then also there is a metaphorical meaning which is to sort of burn or glow within, to stir up a sort of fire within. And this came to develop into a sort of spiritual practise in general. Spiritual practise, especially meditation or any form of asceticism, was referred to as 'tapas', a burning. It's not very easy to understand why this should be. Maybe it's easiest to think of it in terms of energy that, when you are concentrating, when you are meditating, you are creating or arousing or tapping - energy within yourself. This energy is something as it were burning and fiery and radiant like heat. It's psychic heat, as the Tibetans would say. It's 'tomo', it's 'chandali'. So a spiritual life is conceived of in terms of the generation of psychic heat. And by further development of this way of thinking, that heat is conceived of as burning up all sins, burning up all impurities, burning up everything unskilful. So 'tapas' is a pre-buddhistic word taken over by the Buddha, which has got a very wide range of meanings. It's this generation of this fiery energy within oneself, especially through meditation, or by means of meditation. Or one might say that meditation is a specialized form of 'tapasia', 'tapasia' is a wider meaning, more general meaning. So do you get the sort of idea? So, it's a quite, from our point of view, unusual sort of term for the spiritual life, thinking of the spiritual life in terms of heat, of fire, of burning up, of purifying, generating this fiery or incandescent energy; this sort of psychic incandescence. Do you get something of the meaning now? When you are on fire, as it were.

___: I came across the meaning (in the 'I Ching' recently (?) or some similar (meaning?))

S: Ah, same way of thinking. So in the previous suttas, there is a reference to a sort of being

on fire with passion or burning with lust. But you can also be on fire with enthusiasm. So, when you are on fire with enthusiasm, say, how do you feel?

___: Inspired.

S: Inspired, sparked off, you see. No, I wouldn't say 'inspired' because 'inspire' is a breathing into. So, you are on fire, you are burning and blazing - it's rather the opposite process in a way.

___: Radiation?

S: Radiation, you are throwing off sparks. So, what does that suggest? It suggests, if you want to use the analogy of water, your energy is sort of spurting up like a fountain. It's more like that.

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Marichi: In this I Ching (?) and the fire that produced the wind. It sort of (?) in that way, and it's like universal inspiration.

S: Right, expiration!

Marichi: Expiration, yes.

S: Like Udana; Udana is expiration.

So, what happens to your energy as it were when you are on fire with enthusiasm? What is the state of your energy then?

___: Expansive.

S: It's expansive. It's like the fire in the element meditation. It's blazing upward and it's expanding, it's fanning out at the same time. So this is the sort of idea, or this is the sort of impression conveyed by this word 'tapas', 'tapas', which is very inadequately usually translated as asceticism, which suggests something rather repressive and narrow and strict and severe. But it isn't like that at all. It's the arousing within oneself of this incandescent expansive energy.

Marichi: Is it always used in this particular way because you can refer to someone being on fire with lust, and so on, is that (the same word)?

S: That word, tapas, as far as I remember is never used in that sort of way, a different verb would be used. As far as I recollect it is entirely used in these sort of, as it were, spiritual contexts.

Sagaramati: I've heard it translated as 'brooding' which is not very good.

S: Well, yes, it is in a way, in a way, like a hen; you see there is that connotation also of the heat that hatches. Because the seed in the ground also needs warmth too, not even just the rain, if it's too cold and there is too much rain it'll just go rotten. It needs the warmth too, the

sort of fructifying warmth of the sun.

Marichi: It's just that brooding has overtones of frowning almost, rather than being broody.

___: Incubation.

S: Incubation, yes. So, therefore the Buddha says 'faith is the seed, 'tapas the rain' It's by this sort of incandescent psychic energy, this sort of spiritual 'broodiness', if you can pre-empt all the rather sort of flabby connotations of that expression, that causes the seed to sprout. You as it were brood over the seed. You create warmth and energy around the seed and then it can spring up.

So you get the idea? First the seed, then this rain - a rather misleading metaphor perhaps of 'tapas'. It's a warm rain, not to say a hot rain, and it's not only falling down, it's falling up, or rising up.

Siddhiratna: (It) seems a strange word to render into English as austerity.

[142]

S: Yes, indeed! Austerity or asceticism, here. I don't know what would be a good word for 'tapas'. How can you translate these very succinct expressions? 'Saddha bijam, tapo vutthi', faith in the seed, tapas is the rain', that's the literal translation, but the connotations go so far, beyond that. Anyway, you've got some idea now, and then: 'panna me yuganangalam'. 'Panna' is of course the panna' that we are familiar with. The yoke and the plough, yes, that's near enough. So 'wisdom is my yoke and plough'. Do you think that has any definite meaning apart from the fact that the Buddha is continuing this analogy so obviously one thing has to be made to fit with another?

Lokamitra: It continues, it makes sure that the austerities and the faith is guided ...

S: Straight.

Lokamitra: Yes.

Sagaramati: What is a yoke again?

S: Yoke is what goes across the neck of the oxen. I think though here the meaning is more the (there is another word later on for that) I think the meaning here is, 'yuganamgalam', yuga is yoke, 'namgalam', is a sort of limb.

Marichi: A yoke is something you both call plough (?) and also holds it (to the plough?)

S: It's the sort of 'T' shaped bit you know. You know how it is usually constructed, yes. So there is the length of the 'T' in the middle in between the two beasts, and one arm of the T is over one ox and the other arm of the T over the other neck of the other ox. So, it's that whole structure I think which is referred to.

___: Wasn't that device used to carry two buckets?

S: Right, well, that's just a yoke part without the leg of the T.

Marichi: It's a sort of harness.

___: It steers it.

S: But one of its characteristics, it goes straight of course.

___: It cuts.

S: It cuts, though here of course it's the ploughshare that does the actual cutting, that comes later. (Pause.) I'll look up that actual word to see exactly what it ... (Pause.) There is a whole list of things, a list of compound words, (Pause.) I think we can take it as 'plough' in general. The 'yoga' part means 'yoke'.

Padmapani: Does that mean link?

S: It's what joins, yes, link you can say.

Then, 'hiri isa'. Oh, have we finished with 'panna'. Panna, wisdom, is the plough. Your 'yoke and plough'. What does that suggest? It suggests that 'panna' is something practical, does not it? It is what, in a sense, what guides.

___: Is the plough different from the share, the plough is a [143] blade, isn't it, that cuts into the ...?

S: No, the plough is the whole thing, really, though the ploughshare is the blade that actually cuts into the earth.

___: It shears.

S: Though of course very often in many parts of the East, and may be in many parts of India, it's a stick actually, which cuts in. It's not actually a metal blade. It's a stick sharpened at one end.

Marichi: The plough itself would be wooden.

S: Yes. The share is mentioned later on. The yoke and plough seems to imply the whole structure including that part of it which goes across the necks of the oxen. So, it's that, perhaps the structure as a whole, the plough as a whole, which is compared with panna.

Siddhiratna: Wisdom in the sense, or the yoke in the sense of - I can see it holding somebody's head in place as it were, you know, restraining in some sort of way.

S: (Inaudible.)

___: A coincidence.

___: Well, that is, you get that later - mindfulness as goad...

S: Perhaps there isn't very much more to say about that.

'Hiri isa'. 'Hiri' is translated as 'modesty', and then 'isa', isa is the strap. No, the 'pole', sorry, the pole, 'yottam' is the strap. The 'pole', and it's rather difficult to discover what particular part that is, whether it's the pole that goes in between the two oxen or even the stick that sticks into the ground. No, there is a shear later on, this must be the pole in between the oxen I suppose.

___: I don't think they would use the pole that goes into the ground as modesty because you wouldn't cut your way with modesty...

S: But perhaps you know the comparison is now getting a bit far fetched because each particular part has to be made to correspond to a virtue, may be there isn't any very sort of real or living analogy any longer, or at least not in all cases. But, anyway, this whole conception of 'hiri' should be gone into. 'Hiri' is usually joined with another term in Pali 'ottappa' which is again connected with 'tapas', the same root 'tap', to burn, and they are sort of complimentary. Let's say a few words about 'ottappa' first. It's burning, but it's burning within, it's like burning with remorse. When you feel very sorry for something that you've done, you are sort of on fire with remorse, you sort of burn. Do you get the idea? So 'ottappa' also is somehow connected with what we call 'your conscience'. So, it's sometimes translated as 'the sense of shame', or even self-reproach. (Pause.) Now what is 'hiri'? 'Hiri' is shame or modesty; 'hiri' is more the consciousness of what other people will say or other people will think. 'Ottappa' on the other hand is what you think of yourself. Do you see the distinction there?

Marichi: So 'hiri' would lead to 'ottappa' may be?

S: Or vice versa. It's possible sometimes in some contexts to translate 'ottappa' as something more like 'self-respect'. For instance [144] if there is a certain unskilful action which you are being tempted to perform, and if you think 'Oh, I couldn't do it, I couldn't do an action like that, what with my ideals' and 'I would never respect myself again'; that is 'ottappa'. But if you say 'Oh, no, I couldn't do a thing like that, well what would people think of me', that's 'hiri'.

Marichi: I could never hold my head up in the Sangha again.

S: Yes, I could never hold my head up in the world again. So, these two are very often called the two lokapalas, that is the guardians of the world, world in the sense of the whole order of civilized human existence, or society in the widest sense. They are its natural guardians. Without 'hiri' and 'ottappa' there is no civilized human life. Without the sense of self respect, without sensitivity, to the moral judgement of others, there is no real social life for human beings. Now clearly you can have as it were healthy and unhealthy forms of these two things. Clearly, the Buddhist tradition is only thinking in terms of the healthy forms. You can have a pseudo sort of 'ottappa', which is conscience in the psycho-analytical sense, it's only the introjected voice of mother or father. It's not your own true inner voice, as it were - not that Buddhism believes in a sort of mystical inner voice or anything of that sort. It's more the sort of consciousness that something, in this case the unskilful action, is incompatible with you and with what you are. 'How could I do that; this is not according to my own nature, if I did that I would not be me.' Do you get the sort of idea? And when you say, when you speak, in terms of 'hiri', this modesty or shame, you are not just thinking of the opinion of the crowd, you are not motivated by a desire to conform, but you are thinking in terms of what other

quite right thinking, positive people, would feel about you. Not that they are going to be unpleasantly negative but they are going to be, as it were, quite, almost upset or ashamed on your behalf. That would be their sort of attitude, they will be quite regretful that you've done that particular thing. Not that you are motivated by a fear of rejection or condemnation, but you recognize that there is some objective validity in their judgement of you, their moral judgement of you, if you committed that unskilful action. For instance, supposing you are an Order member and you did something really bad, then you would know quite well, well Order members are just not going to like that; they are going to feel quite sad thinking that I've done this. So you might feel restrained by that thought. Not that you are trying to conform, or just go along with everybody else, but you feel they've got a genuine liking and genuine regard for you, and will therefore be genuinely sorry to see or hear of you committing that action. And the reflection that they would be sorry to see or hear of you committing that action, restrains you. And that's quite a different sort of thing from being influenced by the herd instinct. So therefore these two, your own innate sort of feeling of self-respect, your own feeling that a certain action is incompatible with you and your own respect also for the healthy objective feeling of others about you, these two are called 'ottappa' and 'hiri', or 'hiri' and 'ottappa', and are called the two guardians of the world.

___: One doesn't have preference over the other?

S: No, apparently not, they are very much a pair because the Buddha only mentions one here.

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Siddhiratna: I can imagine there being a situation with the one where you should be aware of what other people think of you in your actions, but there is going to be situations where it's very close as it were and you can't quite tell what the effect would be, but the one that's in your own mind, your own conscience, would be the deciding factor, in that way would be superior in a sense.

S: Not necessarily, especially if you are young and relatively inexperienced and may be you don't understand yourself very well.

Marichi: It's not even your own conscience (it's) affected by the outside world - may be not even noticing it ...

S: No, no, I think that the Buddhist point of view would be that the 'ottappa' is not the introjected 'hiri'; it has an independent existence of its own as it were because you have a sort of being of your own. May be, to give an analogy, supposing you are physically completely healthy, a certain type of food is put in front of you, you won't feel like eating it; your system as it were rejects it; you can't tell why, even before you put it in your mouth, no, just like an animal, it's incompatible. So in the same way with certain actions, you have a sort of sensitivity, you know: 'No, this action is not me, it does not belong to me - it is not appropriate for me to commit it, not suitable for me to commit it.' And in a more sort of vigorous form, well 'How could I possibly do an action of that sort?' You see it is something very unskilful. 'No, this does not become me.'

Lokamitra: Does this correspond to natural and conventional morality, but recognizing that there is a positive aspect of conventional morality?

S: Well, conventional morality is positive to the extent that it just helps social intercourse, it just helps the wheels of society to turn that much more smoothly. But I don't think there is an analogy between natural and conventional, and 'ottappa' and 'hiri'. Or perhaps we could say that 'hiri and ottappa' both refer to matters of natural morality, not of conventional morality. You might be quite aware that something is against conventional morality but, on account of your sensitivity to what is genuinely skilful or unskilful, you might quite, with awareness, decide to disregard conventional morality. So you see the force of these two terms now, the 'hiri and the ottappa', and the Buddha here is referring, is only speaking of 'hiri' - your sensitivity to the feelings of other people about your own behaviour in a quite objective sort of way. But perhaps the other is also to be understood. So, that's the pole - whatever the analogy may mean. Perhaps it keeps you straight.

Lokamitra: Often the ploughs in India, or primitive ploughs have, a pole which the person, the plougher holds, to keep it straight.

S: It may be that.

Marichi (?): Yes, in that case it is a balance between the outside world and your inner existence, whatever leads you to becoming behaviour.

S: Yes, right. By the way, in the Abhidharma there is a discussion of Saddha, hiri and ottappa, under the heading of the 'kusalacittas'. In that little book on 'Mind in Buddhist Psychology' there is a very interesting section on these mental states or mental factors which [146] are found in all skilful states of consciousness. There are if I remember rightly, according to that particular text, there are several different traditions, eleven of these. In other words, if you have a state of consciousness which is skilful there are certain mental factors which will always be present in that skilful state of consciousness, whatever its kind, or whatever kind it may be. So there is a list of eleven. If you've got a skilful state of consciousness those eleven factors will always be present in that skilful state of consciousness; certain other factors may or may not be but these eleven will always be present, and the first is saddha. So, this is very, very important, I think in all the enumerations though the lists differ, I think in all the enumerations as far as I remember, in all the different Abhidharma traditions, SADDHA comes first, and I think always or almost always, 'HIRI and 'OTTAPPA' come second. These are present in all skilful states of consciousness. If we do take up 'Mind in Buddhist psychology' for a study seminar we will be going into this in quite a bit of detail. So it is rather interesting that the first three things that the Buddha mentions virtually, or among the first few things he mentions at least, are these factors which the Abhidharma tradition regards as so important.

Marichi: It's interesting that they have both 'hiri and ottappa' as (both) for yourself and the outside world; relation, tug, between the two.

S: Yes. Or not even a tug - here it would be regarded as cooperative because the Buddha is thinking in terms of a healthy person with a healthy conscience, to use our term. And also he is thinking of a healthy person living in the midst of a healthy society whose judgements are normal, not in the midst of a perverted society. Supposing you are in the midst of very kindly, positive, helpful, intelligent people - the way they would feel about your actions, it's the response of people of that sort that you are thinking in terms of, not just society in general, just any old group of people.

Marichi: It's very much an extension of oneself in a very positive manner.

S: Yes, or you yourself are an extension of that again, in a very positive manner. It's the positive individual and the positive group. Or on a higher level it's the spiritual community and the spiritual individual.

So,

'Saddha bijam, tapo vutthi, panna me yuganangalam hiri isa, mano yottam ...

'Mano' of course is mind, and that's the strap. I don't know whether there is any significance in mind being the strap. And then: 'sati me phalapacanam.' Ah, 'share and goad', mindfulness for share and goad. That's quite interesting 'mind' is the strap, mind is what holds things together, yes, and the mindfulness 'sati', which is 'recollection' literally, is both the share and the goad. Now both are sharp, both are pointed. One cuts, the other pricks.

___: The goad is what?

S: The goad is the pointed stick with which you guide the oxen. You don't hit the oxen with a stick, you poke them with it. So mindfulness is obviously rather like, or recollection is obviously rather like that. (Pause.) Let's try and finish this reply of the Buddha at least.

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'Kayagutto vacigutto ahare udare yato saccam karomi niddanam, soraccam me pamocanam'

That's the next verse where the Buddha goes on to say 'Kayagutto' 'Kaya' is of course the body, and 'gutto' is guarded; 'vacigutto' 'vaci' is speech, 'gutto' again is guarded in body, guarded in speech. That means watching over one's body, watching over one's speech. This connects up with a reference to recollection or mindfulness immediately before. One practises mindfulness of the body and mindfulness of speech. I think this is quite familiar ground, isn't it; that you are aware of your bodily movements, aware of what you say, and so on. 'Ahare udare yato'. 'Ahare' is food; 'udare yato' is moderate: following a middle way with regard to food. What do you think that middle way with regard to food is? Well, you neither over-eat nor under-eat, obviously. Everybody has to find for himself or herself what that means in concrete terms. I think we need not discuss this in detail, this moderation in food. It is of course often insisted on in Buddhism. You wouldn't perhaps understand why, I mean, Indians do tend to go to extremes rather in this matter. During the week, or during the month or even the greater part of the year, they may eat very scanty food, their diet may be very scanty. But on feast days, they really do over-eat, they really do stuff themselves, and the sadhus are like this too.

Marichi: Would there be a seasonal variation too? Harvest time?

S: May be, yes. But also perhaps the Buddha is referring to the two extremes. Some people are very, very indulgent in matters of food; others are unduly ascetic; they just have a wrong understanding. So don't be a gourmet, on the other hand, don't starve yourself, follow the middle way.

'saccam karomi niddanam'

Now both the translations I've got really paraphrase here and they add some words that aren't in the text. 'With truth I clear the weeds', says one translation. And the other says 'I make insight weed my crop.' But actually the text says 'with truth I destroy'. The bit about the weeds comes from the commentary, but is quite understandable; may be that was the meaning. But literally, just simply, 'with truth I destroy'. So, destroy what? You could say 'weeds' if you are using the analogy of ploughing and referring to seeds and so on, and so forth. That would be quite a plausible construction. So 'with truth I destroy'. So, this is quite important in a way, that 'truth destroys', it destroys all the old illusions, the old wrong views, which are in fact like weeds, we could say, though the text itself doesn't actually say that in so many words. In the words of the Manjushri, Manjugosha stuti sadhana, the 'light of the sun destroys the darkness'. So, it's a little bit like that also. You can't have the truth, or experience the truth and still entertain wrong views. 'soraccam me pamocanam'. Chalmers really paraphrases here, 'Nor rest 'til final bliss is harvested'. All right, it's quite legitimate to continue the analogy but, the text says nothing about 'harvesting', and the word that is translated as 'bliss' is not really bliss at all. It's more like 'gentleness' or even 'meekness', a sort of gentleness of spirit. 'Soraccam' - 'I am released into a sort of gentleness of spirit'. It means something more like - Chalmers translates 'I make insight weed my crop, nor rest 'til final bliss is harvested.' But the actual line is 'With truth I destroy and having become released or being released I experience gentleness.' This is more the literal translation. And Hare says 'With truth I clear the weeds and full of bliss is my deliverance' For me there is a gentle deliverance, a deliverance which is gentleness, or 'meekness' even according to the dictionary. (Pause.)

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Marichi: Why is it something like that rather than bliss?

S: Why is it even bliss? Even bliss is sort of analogical. The word 'soraccam' means apparently a sort of gentleness, meekness, a sort of balmy softness of spirit, as it were. May be a sort of paradisaical sort of calm.

Marichi: Like a state of grace.

S: A state of grace. It's the sort of softness and gentleness and lightness of it, which is being emphasized, as it were. You are wafted into this sort of state, when you have destroyed, with truth. (Pause.)

Let's go on. 'Viryam me dhuradhorayham'. 'Virya', we all know what virya means, 'is my stout ox', Chalmers says. But ... 'is my bearer of the burden'. In other words, the bearer of the burden is the ox. It's the same root by the way as 'dharma', which means to bear, to support, or that which bears or supports. So 'virya' is my ox, that's quite understandable, isn't it. If you have an analogy with ploughing it's quite obvious that 'virya' is your ox, as 'virya' supplies the energy, the motivation, the power - 'virya' is what keeps the whole thing going.

'Yogakkhemadhivahanam'. And this ox is my bearer to 'yogakkhema'; 'Yogakkhem' is a term for Nirvana; it's usually translated as security; yogakkhema.

Marichi: Does the other text does say that?

S: The other text says that; to security. Security from moil, though the 'from moil' is an addition really.

___: What does 'moil' mean?

Marichi: Moil and toil.

S: Yes, that's understood - a state of security from all troubles.

___: Going back to 'vigour', what's the difference between will, cetana and vigour? Can you have vigour without being willed, as it were?

S: As a technical term 'vigour' is always used in a positive sense, it's always a skilful mental state, whereas 'cetana' can be either skilful or unskilful. 'Virya' is energy or will applied to wholesome objectives. Virya, according to Shantideva, is energy in pursuit of the good. So there always is that reference or that orientation in the case of virya, it's not just will in general. It's will harnessed to something which is recognized as wholesome, or skilful, or meritorious, or spiritual if you like. Originally of course it was just natural energy, even masculine energy. But, as a Buddhist technical term, and especially as a paramita, it means that energy directed to a spiritual goal or at least to a goal which is meritorious which is skilful. (Pause.)

'Gacchati anivattantam'. 'Gacchati' is 'it goes' - that is presumably 'the ox goes', the ox of energy drawing the plough 'goes!' 'Anivattantam', 'without turning back'. Chalmers translates 'without turning back at headlands' but there is nothing in the text about headlands. It goes, or he goes, without turning back - the energy never turns back. Once you've committed yourself, you never turn back. Later on of course you can't turn back, once you've passed the point of 'no return', there is no turning back.

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: Shantideva says something like 'not to start is better than to start and give up'.

S: Yes. 'Yattha gantva na socati.' 'He goes without turning back to that having gone' or 'that to where, having gone, one no more grieves.' Or, as Chalmers says, 'where anguish is no more' 'To that last bourn where anguish is no more', that's a very poetic paraphrase. The text simply says 'To that, where having gone, one no more grieves.'

: So Hare is quite...? It goes where is no suffering.

S: Yes, yes. 'Gacchati aniyattantam, yattha gantva na socati.' 'He goes without turning back where, having gone, one grieves not.' We'll just finish this line, this verse at least.

'Evam esa kasi kattha, sa hoti amatapphala', 'this is how I do my ploughing', 'this is the ploughing that I plough', 'this is the tilling that I till'. 'Sa hoti', 'with which there is', amatapphala' 'deathlessness', that is Nirvana, for fruit - for crop. The seed was faith, now you come to the end result, the crop, the fruit, and that is Nirvana. And for Nirvana there is this 'Amata', the immortal, the undying, which has many of our connotations, with immortal, the undying state, the immortal state, or eternal life kind of state, that is the fruit. And 'etam kasim kasitvana sabbadukkha pamuccati' this ploughing, having ploughed, or this ploughing ploughing all suffering is transcended; one is released from all suffering. Chalmers is more literal here: 'Thus have I tilled with deathlessness for crop, and whoso tills as I is freed from ill'. And Hare is even more literal 'And thus wise is this ploughing ploughed and thence there

comes the deathless fruit, whoso hath this ploughing ploughed set free is he from every ill.'

S: You notice that? It has been wrongly printed.

: How do you mean? Wrongly printed?

S: Well, for instance, go back to 'faith is the seed', or go back to the very beginning:

Bharadvaja: 'thou dost profess to be a ploughman yet thy ploughing see we not.' It should be printed as 'Thou dost profess to be a ploughman, yet thy ploughing see we not, tell who ask what ploughing is thine', then the next line 'of that we fain would learn from thee.' Yes? Then, it would scan better. And in the same way those last two lines: and thus wise is this ploughing ploughed', then there should be a new line: 'And thence there comes the deathless fruit', then a third line: 'and whoso has this ploughing ploughed', fourth line 'set free is he from every ill.' It has been wrongly set, you see? So it doesn't scan.

Marichi: Yes, that's why it looks so odd.

S: Yes, right. (Pause.) Then the farmer Bharadvaja calls the massive copper bowl to be filled with milk, with rice milk and offer it to the master saying 'Let Master Gotama eat this rice-milk. A ploughman indeed is the Master since he ploughs a ploughing for deathless fruit.'

So Bharadvaja recognizes that the Buddha is a true farmer, a true cultivator, the best of farmers, the best of cultivators.

Right, this is the continuation of what we did yesterday. Just a few words first of all. This particular section of the Sutta Nipata is called Farmer Bharadvaja and in the introduction we were told how [150] farmer Bharadvaja, a rich brahmin with much land and many cows, is engaged in the spring ploughing, and in the midst of that spring ploughing there was a distribution of food going on to all the workmen present. So the Buddha happens to be, apparently, staying in that particular village for the night. So he also presented Himself at the food distribution and stood aside with his bowl, just waiting for some food to be put in it. But the brahmin farmer was not very pleased and he spoke to the Buddha rather sharply saying that 'I work for my living' as it were. 'I plough and then I eat; you too should plough and then eat.' So the Buddha says 'I too am a ploughman, I too plough, I too cultivate.' And the Brahmin of course is very surprised. So then the Buddha says in what sense he is the ploughman, in what sense he is the cultivator, and he recites some famous verses. I'll just give you, I'll just read the translation of those verses. We are not going to go into the verses because we did that quite thoroughly last night. But, this is what the Buddha says in reply.

'Faith is the seed, austerity the rain, wisdom my yoke and plough, my pole is modesty, mind is the strap and I have mindfulness for share and goad.'

'Ordered in act and word, in eating temperate, with truth I clear the weeds, and full of bliss is my deliverance.'

'To a security from moil doth draw vigour, my team in yoke, and on it goes, nor turns it back, it goes where is no suffering.'

'And thus wise is this ploughing ploughed and thence there comes the deathless fruit. And

whoso hath this ploughing ploughed, set free is he from every ill.'

So, we went into this thoroughly, we spent the whole evening practically, apart from the meditation, on that last night. So obviously we can't go over it again in that sort of way. But it is all on tape or record for the benefit of those who want to hear it and no doubt in due course it will be transcribed.

Now, after the Buddha had said that, then farmer Bharadvaja caused a massive copper bowl to be filled with rice-milk and offered it to the Master saying 'Let Master Gotama eat this rice-milk, a ploughman indeed is the Master since he ploughs a ploughing for deathless fruit', for the fruit of Nirvana. So that's what we dealt with last night.

Could we continue from here. Now, in this section that comes, a strange sort of thing happens. So we are going to go into that. May be I'd better do the reading since very few of you have got texts. So, the brahmin farmer Bharadvaja, he offers rice-milk, or milk pudding, rice-pudding as we would say, to the Buddha in a massive copper or brazen bowl. But what does the Buddha say? So, in this ensuing section some quite different questions are raised which we can deal with quite independently of what has gone before. The Buddha says

'Not mine to enjoy fare won from chanting hymns. 'Tis not the thing for seers, oh brahmana. Fare won from chanting hymns the wake reject, where Dharma reigns, this, Brahman is the rule.'

'Nay, thou must offer other food and drink to a Rishi wholly consummate. The cankerless, untroubled man of calm, sure field is that for merit-seeking man.'

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'Then, Master Gotama,' this is what the brahmin says, 'to whom shall I give this rice-milk?' and the Buddha says:

'Brahma, I see no one in the world with its devas and brahmas, or on earth with its recluses and godly men, devas and men, by whom that milk rice if eaten could be wholly digested, save by the man thus-come, Tathagata, or by his disciple.'

'Wherefore, brahmin, cast that rice-milk where there is but a little green grass or throw it into water without creatures.'

and the brahman poured the rice-milk into water where there were no creatures, and the rice-milk thrown into the water, seethed and hissed and sent forth steam and smoke, just as a ploughshare heated the livelong day, when thrown into water seethes and hisses and sends forth steam and smoke, even so that rice-milk seethed and hissed and sent forth steam and smoke.

So, that little section, we are going to go into. So it is rather mysterious, isn't it? It has its parallels in other sections of the Canon. So there are really two points to be gone into; one, why did the Buddha reject the milk-rice, the rice pudding, and when it had been rejected and thrown into the water, why did the water steam and bubble. I mean what is all that about? So there are these two questions. So first of all, why did the Buddha reject that offering?

___: Because it wasn't a worthy offering.

S: Well, here he was, here he was, the Buddha, standing at the food distribution with His bowl waiting for some food. But when the brahmin gives him food, he rejects it, why?

___: Is it the same food as being distributed to everyone else?

S: It isn't, no. Well, that's not clearly stated, rice-milk, it seems to be a bit special. May be it isn't just the ordinary rice that he is feeding the workmen.

'Then farmer Bharadvaja caused a massive copper bowl to be filled with rice-milk and offered it to the Master saying 'Let the Master Gotama eat this rice-milk, a ploughman indeed is the Master since he ploughs a ploughing for deathless fruit.' Now the Buddha says 'Not mine to enjoy fare won from chanting hymns, 'tis not the thing for seers, oh brahmana. Fare won from chanting hymns the wake reject, where Dharma reigns, thus brahman is the rule.'

So he is rejecting the food because it would not be proper for an Enlightened person or spiritually developed person to accept food which had been won or attained as a result of chanting hymns. Let's have a look at that. 'Gathas', chanting gathas. Now this can be taken in two ways. The Buddha himself has just chanted gathas, so there are two possibilities. The actual grammatical structure makes it ambiguous. It could be that that particular food has been offered to the brahmin as a fee for his, the brahmin's, chanting Vedic hymns. Or it could be that the brahmin pleased with the Buddha's teaching was offering Him that milk-rice as a fee for having chanted those gathas because the teaching was given in verse form. I think personally the second alternative is probably the more likely. So while the Buddha was quite ready to accept food, in that case which was given Him because he was a mendicant and needed to be supported, he was unwilling to accept food which was offered as a fee for religious services, whether to the Buddha Himself, for chanting or in the case of the other interpretation, to the brahmin himself for having chanted verses on some earlier occasion, Vedic verses.

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This seems to be behind the Buddha's refusal whichever way you interpret those particular lines, that he was not willing to accept food which was offered by way of fee, or food which had itself been given as a fee for religious services performed by the brahmin. In other words he was not willing to make a profession as it were out of the giving of religious teaching. Do you see the meaning? See the drift of it as it were?

___: It's a bit like people - many - who say they are not going to prostitute their art by accepting money for it.

S: Yes so it's as though the brahmin was quite pleased with the teaching, but he had his brahmin mentality at the same time; may be he earned much of his living by chanting Vedic hymns, so he was accustomed to being rewarded, may be that's how he got those five hundred cows. So hearing this excellent gatha from the Buddha he was so pleased he thought it only right, only natural, as it were, only appropriate that he should give the Buddha a fee. So he called for this very special milk-rice in a beautiful brazen bowl, perhaps he was going to give the bowl too, who knows... So he was thinking not in terms of an offering to the Buddha but in terms of giving a fee for the teaching, making a payment for the teaching and the Buddha

therefore refused to accept the food as payment for teaching. This seems to be at the bottom of the Buddha's refusal, howsoever one interprets that particular verse.

Marichi: Because he is not given it in gratitude, is he? He is given it as part - you've earned it (so to speak).

S: Well, yes, gratitude is there, but there is this idea of fee as it were mixed up with it. You are grateful for it but you think you've got to pay for it.

Marichi: Well not pure gratitude, I mean (it goes) along with this idea of 'I've ploughed and I've earned my food' - you've sung a gatha and you've earned this.

S: Right. So the Buddha wanted to discourage the brahminical idea of religion, or what passed for a religion among them, being made into a sort of profession in a sense of a means of livelihood.

Chintamani: This carries on from the early sections of the Udana where he is trying to redefine what a brahmin really is, or his use of the term 'brahmin'. I forget which passage it was where a brahmin comes to him while he is sitting under a tree, and says something concerning that, and then redefines what a brahmin is. (It's) almost (as if) perhaps he has spent a lot of his time going around really trying to wake people up to the caste system and what they really should be doing.

S: It's not completely clear as I said whether the fare won from chanting hymns refers to the brahmin himself chanting hymns and gaining that milk-rice as a fee, which he then passes on to the Buddha, or whether it referred to the Buddha's own chanting of that particular gatha. It can be taken in either way. So the Buddha doesn't want His teaching or the fact of His teaching, to become a trade as it were, as the brahmin chanting a Vedic hymn is.

Then he goes 'Nay, thou must offer other food and drink to a great rishi wholly consummate, the cankerless' (that is one who has overcome the asravas) 'untroubled man of calm, sure field is that for merit seeking men.'

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This introduces the idea of merit and the greater the merit of the person to whom you offer, the greater the merit that accrues to you from that offering; that's of course an old idea. So the Buddha rejects this whole idea of religion or religious services as a source of income, as a profession. So this is in fact very strongly stressed. In a sense it's the sort of 'Marxist' principle, if you like to interpret the Marxist principle very liberally and spiritually, that from each according to his ability, to each according to his need. The bhikkhu accepts from the lay-people what he needs, and what he needs is generally summed up under four headings; food, clothing, shelter and medicine, to which in all the modern Buddhist countries they add, writing materials, for making your sermon notes and so on.

___: Apparently Marx wasn't the originator of that particular statement.

S: Oh, I am glad to hear that, who was?

___: It was an early Christian saint.

S: Oh, that's very good; I wonder where he got it from.

___: He got it from (?); I am not sure which saint, I'll have to check.

S: Oh, that's very interesting. But it's certainly the Buddhist principle to his, from each according to his ability and anyway the monk accepts what he needs and gives what he can in the way of teaching. But there is no nexus between them - you give me so much food and clothing and I'll give you so much teaching. What you get is not wages for the teaching that you give. You give all you can, you just take what you need. (Pause.) So the Buddha is rejecting the whole Brahminical attitude towards the Vedic teaching, the Vedic religion. They had made it definitely into a sort of trade, and they refused to impart certain gathas, and don't forget everything was handed down by word of mouth, there were no books. So you were very dependent on the person who had memorized the gathas. They refused to impart certain gathas until the cows were brought forth and handed over, otherwise you didn't get the gathas. That was their sort of attitude. But the Buddha felt that this was completely wrong and he wouldn't countenance it even indirectly. That you give whatever you can without any thought of reward for yourself, and you are entitled to take what you need, but there no connection between the two: 'That you must give me this, because I give you that' no, I just give what I can. Or 'give me what I need, but not because I have given you what I could.' The two are quite separate as it were. This is why, and this is a very good thing, and this ties up with what Marichi was talking about in the morning, that in the Theravada countries, well I know this has got its weak sides, but it is a very good principle, 'nothing is expected from the bhikkhu' apart from observing the rules. He is not expected to do anything, even if he doesn't want to give sermons, he doesn't want to give teachings, he doesn't want to chant. I won't say nobody minds but, that is fully accepted that he doesn't do anything. The mere fact that he is living the life and observing the rules and accepting offerings, that is quite enough. So this is only one very good thing about the Theravada-type community, that whatever the bhikkhu does, it's entirely of his own free will. If he goes out and preaches or he writes books, or he goes giving advice to people on worldly matters, or he treats the sick or in modern times, takes up social work [154] it is entirely of his own volition. He is not expected to render services to the public in return for his maintenance. All he is expected to do is to observe the rule. But he is not expected to do anything for anybody. Do you get the idea? So the public supports him not with the idea of getting anything in return by way of concrete services, though of course sermons and so on are always welcome, there is always bhikkhus to give those but simply that they are happy to get merit as it were by supporting someone who is leading, as they believe, a better life than they are leading. But that is enough; he's made his contribution just by living his life; he is not expected to perform any services over and above that. By being a bhikkhu, he is performing the service. Nothing further is needed. It's a rather different attitude. You are not intended to, not expected to, justify the amount of money that is spent supporting you. No, people feel they get merit from that.

___: Is there justification demanded within the monasteries?

S: No! I mean, I've had quite a lot of contact with bhikkhus. Bhikkhus who meditate and who go out giving lectures, and write books, are highly regarded. But bhikkhus who don't do anything are not looked down upon. This is quite true. And everybody feels, well, you do what you feel like doing, but everybody observes the rules, but, you get so used to it though it might seem quite strict to the outsider, it's just your normal way of life. You just don't feel that you are observing a rule, you are just living your own life in the vihara. But this is a very

good thing in the Theravada countries, in fact most Buddhist countries. There is no pressure on the monk to engage in any particular form of activity. Though there is many a monk who has spent his whole life as a bhikkhu and done absolutely nothing for the public, and he is certainly not criticized, he just is more and more venerated the older he gets! (Laughter.) He's been in it for so long! The mere fact that he is leading the life, the mere fact that he is living in the monastery; he is not married, he doesn't eat after twelve o'clock, he does all the right things in that sort of way, and people think 'well what more do you expect; he is living the life, we are happy to support him.' He need not do a thing, need not do a stroke of work as it were. They don't think of him as a parasite at all, it's a quite different sort of attitude.

Chintamani: Is that from the point of view that to live the life, it has its own effect anyway?

S: It has its own effect anyway, it's own value for society, what to speak of the person who is living the life. So this ties up with the Buddha's attitude of just because you are supported you are not under any obligation to perform certain services. You are being supported because people think it's good to support you; you are not being given support as wages for services rendered. (Pause.)

So the question arises 'Master Gotama to whom shall I give this rice-milk?' The Buddha has refused it, has rejected it. The brahmin seems to have some understanding because he says 'to whom shall I give it?' He realizes that this sort of question arises. And the Buddha says 'Brahmin, I see no one in the world with its devas, maras and brahmas or on earth with its recluses and godly men, devas and men, by whom that milk-rice, if eaten, could be wholly digested save by the man thus-come', Tathagata, Buddha, 'or by his disciples, wherefore, brahmin, cast that rice-milk where there is but little green grass, or throw it into water without creatures.' 'And the brahman poured the rice-milk into the water where there [155] were no creatures. And the rice-milk thrown into the water seethed and hissed and sent forth steam and smoke, just as a ploughshare when heated the livelong day, when thrown into water seethes and hisses and sends forth steam and smoke, even so that rice-milk seethed and hissed, and sent forth steam and smoke.'

Well, what's all that about?

Mangala: It means that if he'd thrown (it) in water where there were creatures, the creatures would presumably have eaten from it and similarly if there had been grass, presumably the grass would have been adversely affected and then throwing it into the water where it hisses, it shows you the nature of the rice-milk, that it was something, well, bad or evil, and so on.

Lokamitra: Do you mean permeated by the bad or unskillful way it was got?

S: No. You could look at it like that, I mean, that the text does take that sort of meaning but actually I think the meaning is not that.

___: It seems as though there is a difference in elements, the image you get. If you put fire in water you get fire and water, and then hiss and bubble and (?)

S: No, I think that the fact here to be considered, what is the operative factor, is that it had been offered to the Buddha. The Indian belief very widely is that if something is offered to somebody a change takes place in that something, especially if it's food. This is why in India

they are very particular about eating leavings of food, or even food that has just been offered to somebody, technically even that is leavings, once it has been offered to them. In the case of someone whom you respect as a teacher, food which has been offered to him, which then you partake of is called 'prasad', 'prasad'. In the Memoirs, there is a bit about this, about Anandamayi's prasad. Do you remember that? This sort of idea of prasad figures very, very much in Indian devotional religion. And I think the roots of the idea go right back into the Buddha's time and beyond, the idea that food especially is offered to somebody, a change takes place in the nature of the food. So that you should not accept the leavings of someone, as it were, inferior to yourself. This of course unfortunately is all linked up with the caste system too. Food, which is leavings of food in the ordinary sense are called 'jutha', and normally you never take the leavings of anybody else's food. This is just not done in India, except between intimate friends or within the family sometimes. Or you take the leavings, or what are technically the leavings of a teacher or guru, that is prasad, and it's sort of sacramental food then it's impregnated with something. So, it's as though, by having offered that food to the Buddha, the food had become as it were impregnated with a sort of energy which rendered it indigestible. That energy could not be assimilated by anyone other than the Buddha Himself, who had already refused it on other grounds, or by a disciple of the Buddha who, presumably could also refuse it on the same grounds. And it's that energy which is now in the food, that (ojus?) as it were, which causes the hissing and steaming and bubbling, not the physical heat. I think this, the idea seems very strange to us, but it's clear that, I mean, the Indians of those days, and those who compiled the texts, they believed these things. So, it's against this sort of background that we must see this passage.

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Mangala: What about, say, begging for food, would that be considered not 'prasad'? You know, you beg, you beg for food, would that be considered bad?

S: Yes in a sense the bhikkhu is supposed to transcend all such things. But in the case of the bhikkhu, well, he just takes any sort of food. The act of begging is so meritorious that whatever there is of an unwholesome nature in the food is there, as it were, purified. Great merit is attached to the act of begging itself. But there are many stories in India about the effects of food on you because you have taken it from a certain source. I remember when I was in South India I was told the following story, I meant to put it in the Memoirs but it got left out, that there was a certain sadhu - a Hindu sadhu - who was wandering from place to place, and one day he was entertained for a meal at the house of a certain rich person and was offered rice and so on. Next day he moved on. After his departure they discovered that a certain silver dish was missing. So they suspected the sadhu, so they went dashing off after him and sure enough when they caught him he had the silver dish under his robe. So they were very shocked, very upset and they really upbraided him. So the sadhu said 'Really, I just don't know how it happened, I am really very, very sorry, it's a terrible thing, how on earth could I have done it? Let me think.' 'Ah' he said 'I know, the day before I accepted rice from the house of a thief.' You see? So this idea is very widespread. You should be quite careful who you take food from. Being a wandering ascetic and begging your food from door to door is a practise in itself, but very often it is said by spiritual teachers both - Buddhist and Hindu that if you want to intensify your practice, if you want to make quite sure no undesirable vibrations enter in, you should cook your food yourself, or it should be cooked by your teacher or by your disciple or a fellow disciple. This is the best thing to do. You should not eat food outside, from people who are leading a quite different sort of life from you. This is one of the reasons why in India restaurants never developed. The orthodox religious Indian

would never go to restaurants. Look at the sort of people who prepare the food; look at the sort of conditions under which the food is prepared, not thinking about hygienic conditions merely, and I think there is a great deal in this. I also think that, now we are on the subject, one of the reasons, it's just one reason, why the atmosphere and so on, is so positive at Sukhavati, I am quite sure is, because the only food you eat most of the time is food which is prepared by yourselves on the premises. So no doubt one should not attach too much importance to these things and not be precious, but I mean there is certainly something in all this. If your food is prepared by people on the same spiritual wavelength, or if you prepare your own food this is definitely better for you. I mean, as I said, there is no need to be precious about it. If you are a wandering monk, if you are begging your food from door to door, that itself is a very powerful spiritual practice. So such a wandering monk need not bother who he takes food from, whether they are good people or bad people etc, etc.

___: Is this where the practice of sharing out the offering of food on the shrine...?

S: Yes, this comes from; of course it'S offered to the Buddha as were. It becomes, as it were, sacramental, and if it's done with faith and devotion, yes, surely there is something in that. [157] But again we must not be very precious about it; (we must) feel a genuine feeling of that kind. We genuinely have offered it to the Buddha. If we were just placing it on the shrine, well that's quite different. Some people will genuinely feel they have offered it to the Buddha. The Buddha has accepted it as it were, it has been transformed. (Pause.) So the milk-rice having been offered to the Buddha, it becomes sort of sacramental food, even though he hasn't partaken of it literally. Its quality has changed. So that is revealed when it's thrown into the water. So this question of food from this point of view is quite important. (Pause.) Any query from that?

Asvajit: I've certainly noticed that when I've eaten food prepared by other Order members, that it's more refreshing somehow. (Pause.)

___: Could it be said that food prepared in anger is almost poisonous food?

S: Yes. It's very strange, what you say reminds me of some of the writings of Strindberg, the great Swedish dramatist and novelist, he had this idea very strongly and it appears in some of his novels and stories and plays. In this form the cook of the family hates the family, she hates her employers. So nothing that she cooks for them does them any good. She gets fatter and fatter, stronger and stronger, but they don't get any nourishment from the food that she cooks for them, even though she is apparently cooking them good food, because she hates them so much and the hatred passes into the food as it were. So Strindberg has picked up this idea, as it were, quite intuitively.

Mangala: This has actually been proved in experiments in Germany. And they did tests with several groups of children and then, I think this was after the war, and some of the groups, they had different matrons looking after them and some were given food supplements at a certain period but it turned out that the ones who made most progress were not ... in other words progress didn't just depend on getting food supplement, but also depended on them having a benign matron. In other words some of the groups that were changed and were given this matron who was very punctilious and very fussy, a bit horrible I suppose, their development was retarded even though they had been given a food supplement. So that it was quite clear that one's environment is very important if food is to do you any good, even if it is

good food.

S: But it's more than a question of the environment, it's the effect of the person who prepares the food on the food itself. For instance in the Zen tradition, the post of cook to the monastery, to the other monks, is one of the most important in the whole monastery, and sometimes the whole monastery depends upon the cook, and often very senior monks have this post. And it's not just because food is important in the ordinary sense, but from this point of view too, at least, to some extent. So your mental attitude and your feeling when you are cooking is very important. And I am sure this must be even more so on retreats. If people do the cooking calmly and happily it must have an effect. So you sometimes go and eat in a restaurant, it feels quite horrible. So one must watch one's mental state when one is preparing food. I think one of the reasons, one of the contributing factors why people are neurotic nowadays, mentally disturbed and not very happy is that the sort of traditional precautions, even taboos if you like, are just not observed any more.

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___: I think we noticed a difference at Sukhavati where at first everybody was called upon to cook, and there was a rota which included just about everybody. And then it changed to just those who wanted to cook, they went on to the rota, and they did the cooking.

S: Oh, I hadn't realized that that not everybody takes a turn. It's only those who want to take a turn.

___: Now, that's the case.

___: (?) want to cook and the meal would be terrible; you'd be chopping up ...

___: There was a noticeable difference.

S: It wasn't simply that it was a badly cooked meal?

Subhuti: I think it was mostly that.

Lokamitra: No, I thought it was more because of how it was prepared.

S: Ah yes.

___: (It was probably) maliciously prepared, just seeing that could put you off.

Marichi: Probably collective (?)

___: Somebody just didn't know how to cook! (Laughter.)

Marichi: I mean if you do know how to cook then it probably improves your feeling as you prepare it.

S: I am sure if you watched a cook, you'd find out how to cook.

___: But then they would tend to be good cooks.

___: Or people interested.

Marichi: Yeah. They would tend to be good cooks because when I am in a bad mood, I just don't want to cook.

S: Because, of course, cooking is doing things for other people. It's caring, it's nurturing. If you are in a bad mood, well, that's the last thing you want to do.

Marichi: It's got very strong connections (I think).

S: That's why in Indian families, the womenfolk do all the cooking normally. But if one of them is feeling a bit off colour one day, for any reason, she will ask somebody else to do the cooking. They are quite particular about this. (Pause.)

___: If begging is so meritorious as to neutralize the unwholesomeness that has been imparted to food by the mental state behind it, what is it that, what is it in begging that makes the merit so powerful?

S: Well, it's the whole experience. First of all you have to put [159] yourself in a very humble position, you are the one who is going to receive, you can't have any sort of feeling of pride or anything like that, people may abuse you as you go around; all that sort of thing. You will realize your dependence upon other people objectively speaking, your dependence on nature even. You are at it were quite at the mercy of other people, other people are in a very good position to ridicule you or humiliate you or anything of that sort, quite easily.

___: Don't you think that even that could be abused, some people would be prepared to put up with that just to... they (don't like) to work may be.

S: That's true. But then that's not begging in the religious sense.

___: What is the root meaning, the root word of begging, do you know?

S: 'Bhikkhuti', to beg, from which we get 'bhikkhu' and 'bhikksha' - 'Bhikkhu' literally means beggar; one who begs alms.

___: Quite often people look down on that kind of ... it's just something there that's being represented (and) they feel the need to look down on it.

S: But I think in the West there isn't that sort of tradition of religious begging. When I went to Italy I saw some nuns begging sometimes, and it was done in a quite shameful sort of way - also (in) a sort of touting kind of way. It wasn't very open and frank, as it were, as it is in India. They were sort of sidling up to you and or wheedling though they were nuns, they were religious people.

Marichi: Were they getting any response?

S: Not much, I am sorry to say. I felt quite sorry for them - people either just brushed them aside or took no notice of them, and they were clearly used to such treatment. I could not help feeling that they felt that treatment. And some of them were quite elderly women. It seemed

quite a pity that they had to beg in that sort of way. They were probably just begging for they were just begging for their nunnery and not for themselves individually.

___: And traditionally (begging) is just to go and stand silently at the door.

S: Yes, that is for the Buddhist monk; the Hindu sadhus sometimes call out. Very often they call 'Bhikkshang da hi' (?) which means 'give alms'. Or they go round calling 'Hari ram, hari ram', or they beat a little drum. But the Buddhist tradition is that the bhikkhu must not say anything. On his alms-round he can't say anything at all. He is not supposed to enter into any conversation. At most he recites a little verse of thanks - 'Abhivajana-silasa', that little verse from the Dhammapada. Tibetan lamas, that is monks, Tibetan monks who beg have a beautiful melodious chant which is very pleasant to listen to. They stand outside your [160] door and they've got some very beautiful verses of blessing which they chant to the accompaniment of a very musical drum, and it goes on for several minutes, by which time you've heard them you've had time to go and get something and give. And then some of them have another chant, which they chant afterwards. There is a very melodious sort of chant, more like a song almost, and many of them do it very beautifully.

___: You've been begging in India, haven't you?

S: Oh yes, as per memoirs, yes.

___: I haven't read your memoirs, would you say a few words about it?

S: Why it's all written down there, actually it's all there. There will be a bit more about my experiences in Kalimpong. (But) it's quite an experience by itself. It's quite difficult to describe actually, though you can say what you did, but to describe the actual feeling and meaning of it is quite difficult.

___: I imagine that with the Tibetans chanting there is a slight difficulty there that it might be understood that one is singing for one's supper...

S: No, Tibetans don't take it like that, they take it as 'here is the monk; he is going round and out of the goodness of his heart he is invoking blessings upon the people in the house, and they give him some food. Not that he is doing it and getting something in return though it might sometimes be like that in practice, at least in principle Buddhists are always very careful to keep the two things separate. For instance even different words are used. If you even make a payment of money to a monk after he has done some chanting of the scriptures for you, it's called his 'fee' - not his wages or salary, they always have a different word, just like there is a particular word for the price you pay for a thangka. You never pay for a thangka or buy a thangka, the word in Tibet means 'ransom', you 'ransom' it! (Laughter.) So no doubt very often, because after all degeneration does take place after a while, it is more or less a matter of buying and selling, it is a matter of paying for. But even so, it never in principle, if anyone asked, they've always denied that; they keep to, maintain the principle at least in theory.

___: Of course it's illegal (in England)...

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S: It's illegal in many parts of India. In many parts of India, many villages have notices up that 'sadhus who beg will be prosecuted'. That had started even when I was in India, towards the end of my stay. I think this will be even more so now. (Pause.) All right. Then

'and farmer Bharadvaja, alarmed with hair standing on end, approached and fell with his head at the Master's feet, and cried: it's amazing Master Gotama! It's marvellous Master Gotama! Just as a man might set up a thing overturned, reveal the hidden, show the way to the blind, bring a lamp into the darkness, so that those with eyes could see forms, even thus Dharma has been declared in many a way by Master Gotama. Lo, I go to Master Gotama for refuge, to Dharma, and to the Order of monks. I would go forth nigh Master Gotama, I would obtain full acceptance.' And brahmin Bharadvaja went forth right to the Master and obtained full acceptance.'

This is a very standard or stock conclusion, to a Sutta. The impact of the Buddha's teaching. How the person feels after the Buddha has taught him the Dharma. And these comparisons are standard ones, and even the exclamation 'it's amazing Master Gotama!' Let's just look at the terms there. (Pause.)

Chintamani: It's very interesting the Buddha seems to have used [162] the customs and the whole sort of terminology of Brahmanism, to 'convert' the man. Like he is using all the things he's familiar with - 'prasad' and things like that.

S: Yes. Well, this is very common in the case of at least the older parts of the Pali scriptures. One can see the Buddha very clearly using the language and the imagery of His times. (Pause.)

So these four similes. 'Just as a man might set up a thing overturned, reveal the hidden, show the way to the blind, bring a lamp into the darkness so those with eyes could see forms. Even thus Dharma has been declared in many a way by Master Gotama.' This is a very standard passage. In other words the person to whom the Buddha has been speaking feels that a tremendous change has taken place, that the Dharma has had a tremendous impact on him or her. 'Just as a man might set up a thing overturned' he or she feels as though before they heard the Buddha's teaching the Dharma everything was upside-down, everything had been overturned but now it's round the right way. Now it's been set up on its feet again as it were. Usually we think that we are the right way up, but after hearing the Buddha's teaching you realize that you were the wrong way up, and the Dharma sets you the right way up. (Pause.) So the point is that things are overturned, though we don't realize it, and it's only after hearing the Dharma as it were that we realize that things are overturned or were overturned and can now be set the right way up. So this links up, perhaps, with the whole idea of the turning about in the Yogacara. It's not that you are turned about really, you are turned back the right way round. It seems as though you were being turned about just because you are the wrong way round at present.

___: Sort of, lifted up after you've fallen over. You've fallen over but you don't know that you've fallen over.

S: Yes. So 'Just as a man might set up a thing overturned, reveal the hidden'. So, that's the sort of sensation, that's the experience after hearing the Dharma, as though something that had been hidden was made clear, there is a sense of clarity, of understanding. 'Show the way to

the blind', just as a man might show the way to the blind. One feels as though one was blind before, one has just been shown the way now. Or as a man might bring a lamp into darkness so that those eyes could see forms. You feel as though there is a sort of blaze of light now that illumines everything (and) that before you were in the darkness. So these four similes which are of common occurrence in passages of this sort, they made clear the feeling and attitude of the person to whom the Dharma has been addressed, who had his eyes opened, as it were, who has been set the right way round, put on his feet again, or lifted up, shown what was hidden, etc. So though it's a sort of in a way stereo-type passage it gives quite a strong idea of the sort of experience, and that the brahmin had known nothing of that sort of teaching. He was just living with (his) brahminical traditions and his worldly life. He was making money out of the Vedic verses and so on (and) there the Buddha comes along with a completely new teaching, something he had never heard before a new dharma, a new ideal, a new way of life, and he feels it's as though a complete transformation. (Pause) So it's a sort of revolution as it were. So what's the result of that? The result of this is that he goes for refuge, [163] this is also as it were standard procedure. You hear the Dharma, the Dharma turns you upside down or rather, it makes you realize you were upside down before; the Dharma turns you round the right way. You feel that you really see things now, which you didn't before. You feel as though a light had shined in the midst of darkness so your reaction, your response is to go for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha. You notice that the Brahmin is addressing the Buddha as 'bho Gotama'; 'bho' is a mode of address used by brahmins to other people. Non-respectful, not exactly disrespectful, but not respectful. He does not call him 'bhagavan', as others normally do, and as the text does; 'bho Gotama'. The Brahmins were called 'bhova dis' - there is a reference to this in the Dhammapada 'those who say 'bho', those who just address other people in a very casual, non-respectful sort of way. And the Brahmins are often represented in the Pali scriptures as addressing the Buddha as 'bho Gotama', not as 'Bhagavan' and not as 'Tathagata' or anything respectful, just 'bho Gotama'. So he can't give up the habit even when he is going for refuge, he is going for refuge to 'bho Gotama', not to the Buddha, not to the Bhagavan, you notice this? 'Now I go for refuge to Master Gotama', 'bho Gotama'. It's not 'master', it's more like something like 'my good Gotama', a bit patronizing, for refuge to the Dharma and the order of monks. 'I will go forth nigh master Gotama, I would obtain full acceptance.' The going forth is the 'pabbajja', what afterwards became the novice-monks ordination and the full-acceptance is the ordination into the bhikkhu Sangha as it afterwards became. But here you see it in its oldest and simplest form as 'a going forth' from all worldly ties, and an acceptance into the spiritual community. In other words what, in the case if the upasika ordination, corresponds with private ordination and public ordination. In the case of the private ordination, you go forth on your own, you make your own individual decision to commit yourself to the spiritual life, the three Jewels, and in the public ordination you not only make that commitment but are accepted thereby into the spiritual community of those who have already made that same commitment. So there is the going forth, and the full acceptance; the 'pabbajja' and the 'upasampada'. Or as is it's called in more stereo-type, as it were, monastic terms the lower ordination and the higher ordination. The novice monk's ordination and the bhikkhu's ordination - 'samanera's ordination and the bhikkhu's ordination. But basically that is what it is, a going forth as an individual from the group and an acceptance of you as an individual by other individuals into the spiritual community. But it's become the two grades or ordination, the lower ordination and the higher ordination. But this is what it, you know, really was originally.

____: It mentions his hair standing on end.

S: Yes.

___: Is that terrific shock or fright?

S: It's with...

Marichi: It's with alarm?

S: 'Alarm' isn't really a very good (word), it's more like astonishment, wonder. It's 'prasarabdhī', it's a form of ecstasy. I mean all the hairs of the body and the head stand on end. It's that. [164] He is so overwhelmed with 'prīti', it's a manifestation of prīti. Prīti, you understand. Prīti is one of the nidānas, one of the positive nidānas. In dependence upon suffering arises faith; in dependence upon faith arises delight; in dependence upon delight arises prīti, ecstasy.

___: Bliss?

S: No, bliss is a further stage, that translates 'sukha'; ecstasy translates 'prīti'. It's that sort of ecstatic feeling - whirling up in you, little thrills and shivers of joy going up and down the back of your spine and all that kind of thing, and your hair stands on end with joy. That's the sort of experience which he had - a quite overwhelming experience. You get it sometimes when you listen to very good music. You know the sort of thing.

___: I got it when I heard the root verse of the Bardo.

S: Yes. The technical term is 'horripilation'; it means the hair standing on end.

Chintamani: So bearing in mind that we've just been saying, what is it in Bharadvāja's way of looking at the world that has been given a shake, so that he sees beyond it, if you see what I mean?

S: Well, presumably it's just a wider spiritual perspective. He was living there, a sort of comfortable worldly life. He is occupied with his material possessions, he had accumulated land, he had accumulated cows, oxen, presumably by the exercise of his profession as a Brahmin chanting Vedic hymns and receiving the fees. But, the Buddha just in His brief teaching had revealed a quite different world, a world of faith, or 'tapas', of wisdom, of modesty, and so on. He had no idea of the spiritual life before, you could say, it was the spiritual life itself, the possibility of the higher evolution, that the Buddha had revealed to him. He was just chanting these words that he had learnt from his teacher because people seemed to value their sort of magic power, so he had chant them when being called upon, and receive the fees. May be he was more interested in the fees than in anything else. But at heart he was a quite good person but he just never heard anything like this before. There were no books, there were few wandering teachers and even fewer wandering teachers who were enlightened as the Buddha was, and apart from the Buddha's disciples, as far as we know, there wasn't anybody else. So it's really a revelation. Supposing you were living at home for instance, you are married, you had a job; suppose you'd never heard about meditation, you'd never heard about Buddhism, never heard about any spiritual life. Supposing there wasn't even any Christianity around, and you were completely immersed in just your own ordinary worldly life, and then somebody suddenly comes along, someone with quite an imposing

presence, and you think of taking him to task, but suddenly he is taking you to task, and suddenly disclosing a completely new, a completely different perspective, opens a whole new world just in a few words that you'd never dreamt about but at the same time there is an immediate response from you because you are a human being, that seed is there. The Buddha has just, as it were, put a few drops of water on to the seed, so at once there is a response, at once it starts growing and developing. And you have a sort of overwhelming experience. [165] Or like when you listen to a very great piece of music, such as you never heard before. You had not imagined perhaps, that there was such music in the world. But suddenly you have the experience of it and you respond to that. It's an absolute revelation like a new life.

Lokamitra: It's, you see this with so many people you come across they just cannot appreciate that side of life as it were. The whole area experience is just not there. And so suddenly being shown that or appreciating it, is like having a whole world turned upside-down.

S: Yes, quite, yes. In a way, because we are in a sense familiar with it, it's not that familiarity breeds contempt, but we get used to it, and it doesn't have the impact on us that it has on, or rather it did have, on us even at the beginning, and that it does have on the beginner just because we have as it were got used to, we are more in the swim of it. But to someone who leads again a completely ordinary life and suddenly they hear something of Buddhism, it can be a tremendous shock which at first may be very difficult to handle, even though you are responding to Buddhism very positively but there is such a dislocation in your way of thinking and your whole way of life. And older people especially will feel this.

___: Surely these things continue even after that...?

S: Oh yes, indeed.

___: I find it sort of happens to me once a week sometimes...

S: Every time you get a breakthrough as it were, or something rather disconcerting discloses itself. In fact it should happen and you should be shaken up all the time, 'til you get enlightened.

Chintamani: Just removing myself from this country for a couple of months or so at the end of last year, the further I got away the more the contrast between the life I had been living and what was around at the time became greater and greater.

S: I noticed something of this sort very much, a few years ago. I don't think I spoke about it at the time. It was when we had that little gathering at Asvajit's, do you remember, up at the park, Ananda relinquishing the editorship of the Newsletter after twenty one issues, and I made my way up to that by tube, and on the tube, in the tube train, I was just studying or noticing rather the faces of the people, how drawn and how miserable, how tired, and in a way dead they all looked, and I was thinking about this, and then I just walked from Highgate station up to the park, entered the flat and there were these twenty bright smiling faces all the way round and looked so aware in comparison, as if a completely different world. (Pause) So, I think we have to realize, that, beginners, especially, may go through it quite a bit, after Buddhism has initially hit them, and sometimes they need to be sort of nursed through that. We have to be very considerate, and also to, you know, even regular friends and order members, who are experiencing one of their periodic 'Dharma shocks'. (Laughter.)

All right let's go on through the last paragraph.

[166]

'Now, not long after his acceptance' that is his full acceptance by the spiritual community 'the Venerable Bharadvaja' - now he is 'Venerable' you see - 'dwelling alone, apart, earnest, ardent, resolute, e'er long entered an abiding that supreme end of the godly life, for the goal of which clansmen's sons rightly go forth from home to homelessness, and by his own knowledge did he realize it, here and now, and he knew birth is destroyed, lived is the godly life, done is what had to be done, there is no more of this state. And the Venerable Bharadvaja became a man of worth.'

___: 'A man of worth'?

S: Arahant.

___: That's interesting that, the translation 'man of worth' because in a sense it starts with him as a man of worth in terms of material worth but really he only becomes a man of worth ...

S: Yes. (Pause.) Let's just look at these adjectives for him. 'Now not long after his acceptance, the Venerable Bharadvaja dwelling alone' 'eko'. This is in a way quite important. It doesn't always mean literally 'on your own'. It means more like 'dwelling as an individual'; living your own life. It doesn't necessarily mean not having any contact with other people, but living your own life. Then 'vupakattho', 'vupakattho' means something like 'apart'. As it were, secluded; enjoying privacy you could say; not always being mixed up with other people, - 'Appamatto': mindful. Then 'atapi', this is a very good word. Last night we talked about 'tapas' - the generation of the psychic incandescence, the inner heat, in a metaphorical sense. 'Atapi' means 'with that sort of heat aroused'. It's usually translated as 'ardent', but it's a much more powerful word than that, 'atapi'. And then 'pahitatto', which means 'resolute', determined. So we get the sort of impression from all this.

'E'er long entered an abode in that supreme end of the godly life.' 'Godly life' is a very inadequate translation for 'brahmacharya', the brahma-faring, the sublime life, the noble life, the eminent life, the life rooted in higher states of consciousness, or the life rooted in or expressive of states of meditative consciousness dhyana states. This is what Brahmacharya means. Its secondary meaning is of course celibacy; that also we talked about the other Friday. I think the transcription of that is going into the next Mitrata; Padmaraja rather seized upon it. (Laughter.) So, 'For the goal of which clansmen's sons rightly go forth from home to homelessness. And by his own knowledge did he realize it here and now. And he knew birth is destroyed, lived is the godly life (brahmacharya), done is what had to be done. There is no more of this state', that is the state of conditioned existence. These are all very stock, or standard, formulas. You get them again and again in the Pali Canon. 'And the Venerable Bharadvaja became a man of worth, an Arahant, in the original more general sense.

Any query on that? (pause.) So you can see the sequence of events. There is Bharadvaja engaged in his worldly life, confronted by the Buddha. He challenges the Buddha and the Buddha is more than a match for him. The Buddha reveals the Dharma; the revelation of the Dharma has an overwhelming effect on Bharadvaja, he becomes ecstatic. It's like a great new vision that has been revealed [167] to him. He feels that everything is changed, and he responds to that, he goes for refuge. Having gone for refuge, he goes forth from his home. He

receives acceptance into the spiritual community and then he leads his own individual spiritual life. Is mindful, his energy is all aroused through all the meditative states. He follows the spiritual life right to the end to Nirvana, becomes an Arahant. This is a very common pattern in these early suttas. It's all very simple, very straightforward. We are not told how many years, it might have been two or three years, it might have been thirty or forty years - the accounts are usually very succinct. They don't go into details and little problems and how you wrestle with the 'nivaranas', no, they just give you the sort of summary of the story, the essence of the matter. Like the Upanishads, where a teacher gives the pupil just a few words to meditate upon and he goes away, and he meditates upon them for forty years and then he comes back. He is given a few more words and he goes away and meditates upon them for thirty years. And the text just says he went and meditated upon them for forty years and then came back. (Laughter.) It does not give you the whole detailed history of the forty years, or the thirty years, or the twenty years. And so it's much like that here, we mustn't probably assume it was really as short and as simple as it might sound. There were probably many ups and downs before he finally got there. And some Suttas, of course, do actually deal with the different ups and downs of different monks and how the Buddha handled them.

___: Does he turn up again in any Sutta?

S: I don't remember. I think there is a biography of him somewhere. There may well be some verses in the Theragatha, I don't remember. (Pause.)

___: There were other Bharadvajas, weren't there?

S: There were quite a number of Bharadvajas, he is called Kasibharadvaja in the text. The Bharadvaja brahmin from Kasi - Benares. 'Bharadvaja' is a (go?) name, not a personal name. There is a whole family of (?) Bharadvajas (?). Any query on that? What's the general impression you get from all this? I mean, first of all those who have been through the whole Sutta, who were here last night, what sort of general impression do you get from the whole thing?

Who was here last night too? (Pause) What impression do you gather from the whole thing? You are in the world of ancient India, you are firmly rooted in context.

Marichi: I was quite confused by this one I think because I couldn't understand what was going on about the food and apart from (that) it was obviously not fit to eat (?) some point

S: I think one can ignore the food in that case. The important thing is the teaching, the Buddha's gathas.

Marichi: But I hadn't taken in that the Buddha had given a gatha.

___: It's quite similar to the 'Dhaniya' one, where he builds up and then turns him upside-down as it were.

S: Right but then there is a difference. I mean the situation of Bharadvaja and the situation of Dhaniya are very similar but there [168] is a difference. What is that difference?

Marichi: Well, what you said last night, he is not negating, he is not saying (?).

S: Yes, there is that too, but there is a difference in their ways of life. What is that? (Pause)
Well, Dhaniya is just an ordinary cultivator but, Bharadvaja is a Brahmin. There is also the aspect of traditional 'Brahmanism'. So here the Buddha's teaching is being shown in juxtaposition with traditional brahmin attitudes, perhaps in a state of great degeneracy. The free gift of the teaching as opposed to reciting 'gathas of the Vedas for hire' as it were.

Marichi: It's much more political in that sense.

S: It's almost the Dharma or what later became 'Buddhism' in conflict with degenerate Brahmanism.

Lokamitra: By refusing the rice-milk, it's almost as he is insisting that Bharadvaja realizes the importance of the Dharma, he is really laying it on him, not giving him a chance to get away with ...

S: Yes, there is that too. That it's not enough just to give some milk-rice even though it may be in a brazen bowl. It's your own life that you've got to give. Yes, that's a good point.

___: Did we discuss at all the places where he suggested the milk-rice be thrown, just discarded - places where there was little or no grass growing?

S: This is a common thing in Buddhist tradition, especially for monks, that you don't throw away leavings of food or water, where there are living beings, or into water. You don't urinate where there are living creatures, you don't urinate in water; there are rules of that kind for bhikkhus.

Marichi: When you are living out in the country, all that seems very natural...

S: Yes, right.

Marichi: You really don't pollute anything.

S: Yes, right. So, any further words on this general impression you get from the whole Sutta? (Pause.)

___: Clarity. The Buddha knows exactly where he stands.

S: Yes. I would suggest that those who weren't present last night, if they do get the opportunity, they listen to this tape of the discussion. I think it is quite an important one, the discussion on the Buddha's teaching in those gathas that he uttered. (Pause.)

___: Perhaps we could have a night for that because there were quite a few from Pundarika who weren't here for that.

S: Well, anything of general interest arising out of the whole Sutta? We will be finishing in a few minutes. (Pause.)

___: What's of interest to me is that it's someone in a rut, [169] (perhaps) closed to religious matters, spiritual matters, and not seeing it, not knowing that you are half asleep or that you

are in a rut. Something comes along that jolts just to bring you up, to make things clear.

S: Very often you do need the jolt from outside - you need the confrontation, as it were, by some other person.

: I remember in the Hui-neng Sutra; Hui-neng seemed to be doing that with certain bhikkhus (who'd) got in a rut may be reciting suttas.

S: Yes.

: It seemed to be like that; you half go asleep after all unless you keep 'up-dating' yourself, bringing yourself back again. You half doze, and then you are just rather mechanical; you need that charge again.

S: There is always that danger. (Pause.) You need constant up-dating, up-grading. (Long Pause.)

: There seem to be many examples from within the Friends of a nexus of still people giving and expecting things in return, and vice-versa, rather than this principle of 'from each according to his ability and to each according to his needs'.

S: I think sometimes it happens but only in a subtle way, certainly not in a gross material or economic or financial way, but certainly in terms of appreciation and thanks and recognition; certainly that, very often, even though it may be quite subtle and unexpressed. If someone does something you should appreciate what they do, not as a payment to them for what they've done, but just because you do appreciate it quite genuinely. But if they feel disappointed that they haven't received that appreciation, well obviously there has been some slightly unskilful element in their attitude, towards what they did even though it was quite good.

: In fact it's quite possible to lead one's whole life simply in order to get that sort of appreciation.

S: Sometimes people, as it were, demand payment in the form of attention. I think this is much more common in the 'Friends', this sort of thing which is obviously much more subtle. You do ... what you do at least to some extent because you want approval, acceptance, recognition. But one must not be too harsh because there is also an almost healthy human need for appreciation. Let's be careful not to be too strict and too harsh as it were, you must not rationalize one's own reluctance to give appreciation by saying 'well, they shouldn't want appreciation anyway - you know, they should just do the job for the sake of doing it'. You shouldn't rationalize away one's own inability to give appreciation. (Pause) But you don't want to be like the traditional housewife who complains 'a slave, you know, I've worked my fingers to the bone day and night, not a word of thanks do I ever get!' You don't want to become like that. If you've really enjoyed doing what you have done you won't look for appreciation, if you do get it, it will just be something extra, just appreciation. But we certainly should remember to appreciate, and should feel like appreciating when we see someone doing something good.

Subhuti: What's a healthy human need for appreciation?

S: Well, it's when you can get along without it, but it's nice to have it all the same.

Lokamitra: You notice this especially in people doing things 'round here; you just mention a word of appreciation of something it makes all the difference.

Marichi: Well they are not doing it in a vacuum then, are they, they are doing it with other people and there is an interrelation.

S: Yes, right yes.

Marichi: And not a direct ...

S: Well you can always distinguish between the person who just appreciates being appreciated and the person who is just hankering for appreciation, and doing whatever they are doing for the sake of the appreciation. I mean in practice, it's quite easy to distinguish these two types of person.

Lokamitra: It's a bit like what you've said as a healthy need for contact...

S: Right, yes.

Lokamitra: You need sparking off, and you need that ...

S: But you should just be capable of carrying on under your own steam, without appreciation if circumstances are such that you don't or can't get appreciation, I mean it just is not given, for some reason or another. You should be perfectly capable of carrying on and not feeling upset if someone just forgets to say 'thank you, or something of that kind. But we should always remember to appreciate - because it's intrinsically good to appreciate.

: When people seek appreciation, then you find it very hard to appreciate then whatever they do.

S: Yes, right.

Chintamani: I was just wondering - I just hope in my own mind that I get appreciated for the worthwhile things that I do, I then get ... people just don't sort of swish appreciation over everything which is all a bit clammy and indulgent, and that I would much rather be healthily criticized.

S: I think I've told before the story of the famous opera singer who after a certain performance went...

(GAP IN RECORDING)

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S: I think it's addictive. I think if you get too much of it, of the wrong sort of appreciation - in your younger days, and it's quite indiscriminate and regardless of what you do, I think it is

addictive.

___: There seems to be two kinds of appreciation then: negative appreciation which is indulgence, and positive which is encouragement.

S: Encouragement to do better. Anyway shall we call it a day, or an evening rather?

(Transcriber's note: another day and another session. The Cunda Sutta or Sutta number 5 of the Sutta Nipata.)

S: All right, Sutta number 5. Who would like to read it?

(5) CUNDA

Cunda

Cunda the smith spake thus:
'Still sage of wisdom wide,
Awake, with craving gone,
Master of Dharma, man
Supreme, chief charioteer:
About recluses here
I ask: How many be?
I beg him tell me that.

The Master

'Four, Cunda, without fifth!
The Master thus replied,
'Then I reveal to thee
As testament when asked:
Way-conqueror, Way-herald,
Wayfarer, fraud-of-Way.

Cunda

Cunda the smith then said:
'Way-conqueror whom call
The Wake? Way-muser how
Incomparable? When asked
Wayfarer limn to me;
Fraud of the Way reveal!'

The Master

'Immune the barbs, doubt crossed,
Delighting in the cool,
Naught coveting, the guide
Of world and gods: the Wake

Call him Way-conqueror.

'Who yondmost as yondmost
here knows, who Dharma here
Proclaims, explains: still sage,
Doubt-cutter, him they call
Way-herald, second monk.

"Who liveth in the Way,
The well-taught Dharma-path,
Alert, restrained, and treads [172]
The blameless paths: third monk,
Wayfarer him they call.

Who, cloaked in piety,
Is forward, boaster, cheat
Of clansmen, unrestrained,
A babbler, masked in mode:
They call him fraud-of-Way.

'And the shrewd householder,
Wise Ariyan listener,
Perceiveth them, knows all
As such; and seeing this
His faith wanes not: for how
Could he confound no fraud
With fraud, cleansed with unclean?'

(Transcriber's note: please turn to page 73 now)

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S: In the Sutta Nipata and some of the other very early Pali texts we often find people asking the Buddha what something really means, or what a certain term really means, especially, it seems, terms for different kinds of people. It's as though the terminology, the religious language, of that part of India in the Buddha's time, was very much in a state of flux - meaning, sort of changing as it were. For instance we find people asking 'Who is the brahmin?' 'What is a brahmin, really'. 'What makes a brahmin?', and in the same way 'What makes the outcast?' Later on we will see that there is a Sutta, the Vassala Sutta, the 'Sutta of the outcast man'. And in the same way, 'What really is a shramana?' Literally a 'shramana' means 'one who is washed', 'one who is purified' and 'shramana' was the term for the free-lance, wondering ascetic. The specifically Buddhist shramana was of course very often called the 'bhikshu or bhikkhu'. Also you get questions about 'Who is the real bhikkhu' and so on. And the Buddha is represented in many of the passages, and many of these texts as explaining and clarifying; and explaining what meaning he attaches to these particular terms, how he understands them, how he uses them. So here Cunda the Smith, is asking not just what is meant by the term 'samana or shramana', but 'how many kinds are there'. This suggests in a way a rather later stage of development, a sort of high degree of sophistication. You have not just got the ideal, not just the ideal shramana, but different degrees in the achievement of that ideal, even a level of complete failure to achieve that ideal. And you will

also notice that though Cunda the Smith asks about the samana/shramana, that is the free-lance wanderer, towards the middle of the Sutta the Buddha speaks in terms of the 'bhikkhu', he drops the term 'samana' and he uses the term 'bhikkhu' which is rather interesting, as though he is coming from a more generally accepted type of ideal to His own specific ideal: i.e. from the samana to the bhikkhu. Or it could reflect historical development, both during and after the lifetime of the Buddha.

So the Buddha says very clearly to Cunda that there are four kinds of samana. There are three degrees of achievement of that particular ideal, and one level as I said, of complete failure. Perhaps I had better say a few words about 'samana' or 'shramana' first, in general, especially in contradistinction to brahmana'. Throughout the Pali texts you get this pair of terms, 'shramana', 'brahmana'. And 'shramana, brahmana' seems to represent a sort of twofold ideal, or two different ideals, but which are constantly linked. The shramana is in a sort of socio-religious sense, a shramana is someone who is wanderer, he's gone forth, he has left home, he is leading a homeless life. He is devoting himself to self-purification, self-cultivation, he is seeking for the truth. But he does not acknowledge the authority of the Vedic tradition - that's the important point. He does not acknowledge the importance, or the authority rather, of the Vedic tradition. So the Buddha was regarded as a 'samana' or 'shramana' for that reason. He was classified among the shramanas. He was actually called the Maha-shramana, the great shramana. So one might say that 'shramana' represents' a type of spiritual ideal which does not recognize as absolute the values of the ethnic religion, in this case Hinduism, as represented by the Vedas, which has completely emancipated itself from the ethnic religious traditions of the group, does not acknowledge that external authority. And of course the 'shramana' also is the 'homeless-wanderer'. So that was one sort of religious ideal current in India in the Buddha's day - the 'Shramana ideal'. Then you had the 'Brahmana'. The Brahmana was what we call the brahmin or the Brahmana, of course, [174] not only himself belonged to, but accepted the authority of the Vedic tradition, sometimes to the extent of actually engaging in the performance of Vedic rituals and sacrifices and so on. Though also, to make it a little more complicated there were a number of people who were brahmins by birth but who rejected the brahmana ideal and followed the shramana ideal and rejected the authority of the Vedic tradition even though they were by birth brahmins. Such for instance was Sariputta and Moggallana, they were brahmins by birth, but they followed the shramana ideal, not the brahmana ideal. The brahmana ideal was not an ideal that encouraged going forth into the homeless state. The brahmana usually remained at home, that is the brahmana following the brahmana ideal. He usually remained at home. So he led a sort of semi-religious life - he usually occupied himself with Vedic study, with teaching the Vedas to a group of pupils, performance of rites and ceremonies, perhaps some meditation too, or at least contemplation on the significance of those ceremonies - the symbolic significance and so on. So, this was the brahmana ideal. The brahmana accepted and recognized the authority of the Vedas or the Vedic tradition. He remained at home though he didn't have an ordinary kind of job. He was very much like the Church of England vicar, you might say. He was a bit like that. And, he very often engaged in the performance of Vedic sacrifices, either for his own benefit or for the benefit of other people who employed him for that purpose. Or he might even have cut himself off from all those ritualistic activities, he might be living in comparative seclusion in the forest, but still with his wife and a few pupils. And he might be quite deeply into meditation. So this was the Brahmana ideal. That's the first sort of thing to understand. But again it's still more complex inasmuch as, there was the literal meaning of 'shramana' to consider. That was usually supposed to mean 'someone who has washed', 'someone who has purified himself', someone who is clean of all worldly things or worldly

passions. In the same way the word 'brahmana' meant not just a brahmin in the ordinary sense, but literally it meant, according to the traditional etymology 'one who knew Brahma, one who had a certain kind of spiritual knowledge. So there was always a sort of tension between the ideal as actually practised and the ideal itself, as suggested especially by the etymology of the term for the ideal. So in the case of the brahmin especially you could appeal as it were, if you wanted to, to that original meaning of the term 'brahmin' or 'brahmana'. And you could even say to the contemporary brahmins 'what are you doing living at home?', 'what are you doing being preoccupied with cows and wealth and sacrifices?' 'Do you know Brahma? If you don't know Brahma you are not really a brahmin; you should be trying to know brahma.' So in the same way with the wandering freelance ascetic if he wasn't living up to the ideal, you could say to him as it were 'well, you are supposed to be a sramana, someone who is washed, someone who is pure, cleansed, but you are not. You are not living up to that ideal. So, we can see that despite their sort of socio-religious connotations, the two terms 'shramana' and 'brahmana' stood for two different formulations of the spiritual ideal or a spiritual ideal. But they could sometimes come very close together. So if you took the term shramana seriously, you tried to be a real shramana or true shramana. Or if you tried to take the term Brahmana seriously and tried to be a true Brahmana, you were approximating to pretty much the same ideal. So we get this sort of tension as it were, in the Pali scriptures and in the existing records. So this is reflected in the double expression 'shramana-brahmana'. So when this is used it refers to the sort of dual ideal as it were. There are in a sense two ideals [175] in a sense two socio-religious points of departure. But at their best, the Shramana ideal at its best, and the Brahmana ideal at its best, do tend to approximate and become a sort of dual ideal together, shramana-brahmana. Do you see this? If you take them at a relatively lower level then they are very much in conflict. The free wandering ascetic and the brahmin living at home, with his wife and family performing ceremonies. But they can advance as it were to a higher level. You can have a brahmin who, though he is living at home, technically is virtually a shramana. And you can have a shramana who is himself fulfilling the Brahmana ideal at its best inasmuch as he knows Brahma, whereas he, the shramana, knows Brahma. So you can say in a way, that this sort of tension persists all through the history of Buddhism itself in different forms. In later Buddhism many of the, what are called coenobitical monks, that is to say monks settled permanently in monasteries and not wandering from place to place, they became very much like the brahmins, except that they didn't have a wife and family. But they were settled in one spot as the brahmins usually were. And you had another class of bhikkhus who were more like pilgrims going from place to place and learning from different teachers at different centres. Or you had the very comfortably settled coenobitical monk and the very free and ascetic eremitical monk. But in the end Buddhism seems to have combined the two ideals, they were settled, like the brahmins, in definite monasteries or viharas but they were unmarried and free from domestic responsibilities like the shramanas. It's as though they tried to bring together the best of each. So it's about the shramana that Cunda is asking.

Lokamitra: While we are on this, Bhante, can I just raise a question from ... it's a printed sheet, transcript of something you said on a BBC Conference Working Party, (it) says something here: 'The somewhat rigid separation of monks and laity, a separation which corresponds to the distinction between Parivajakas and (Grehashtas?) in ancient Indian society, rather than to any fundamental difference amongst the members of the Buddhist parochial community.' What are the 'grehash?..)

S: 'Grehasta' means the householder - 'greha' (Pali: Ghara) is 'house'. A brahmin in a sense

was a kind of householder, even though devoted mainly to religious studies and vedic studies.

Lokamitra: So this is in fact what you have been talking about just now.

S: In a way, yes. So, as the Buddha went around, as the Buddha talked with different people, sometimes the Buddha met shramanas, that is to say people who quite independently of the Buddha and Buddhism had left home and were wandering about in search of truth. It seems that in the Buddha's day there was this very widespread movement; there is no real sort of explanation of it, but it's as though lots of, even thousands of young men just decided they just couldn't stand the domestic life any more, and they just left. And this was quite independent of the Buddha Himself. May be, in a sense, the Buddha Himself was an example of it in His early days. There was this very widespread movement of just leaving home, 'going forth', wanting something more, looking for something more, and wandering from place to place, looking for teachers. You couldn't go and buy books of course, you had to go and interview the teachers. So there was [176] this movement in the Buddha's time - it seems to have started just before Him and to have continued a long time afterwards - of young men just upping and leaving home, going forth, abandoning wives and children if they had any, or not even waiting go get married in many cases - just going straight out. So there were thousands of them circulating from village to village all over India, or north-eastern India, anyway, and it seems to have been generally accepted by the public that they should be looked after and supported, that they were doing something meritorious, and that the public should feed them, and that the public would even gain merit by feeding them.

___: Bhante, did the Brahmins themselves formulate any authority for the Vedic scriptures - did they say that they came from any particular source?

S: No, the Brahmins maintained that the vedas were what they called 'Apharoshiya' (?) which meant 'not of human origin'. The Vedas were eternal. They were, in later speculation, they describe them as 'Shabda Brahman', the shabda, the word 'Brahman', the Brahman which was the word. So they regarded them as existing from eternity, much as the Muslims regard the Koran. And they would say sometimes that all books of human authorship are fallible, because their authors are fallible, their authors are just men. But the Vedas are infallible because they are not books of human authorship - they were revealed; individual portions of the Vedas, revealed to individual 'Rishis', seers, who saw them: did not compose them, they merely 'saw' them. But the vedas themselves are not of human authorship, and in a sense they are not of divine authorship. In the case of Islam and the Koran, the Koran is revealed by God, by Allah. But in the case of the vedas, the veda is not even produced by God or revealed by God, it's sort of self-revealing and self-authenticating. It is 'knowledge' itself in a way. That is their idea. Somewhere there is a whole school of thought, it's one of the six schools of Indian philosophy, it is called the (Kurvinamanghsa?) which deals with the nature of the Vedas and so on, and this goes to the extreme of saying that things exist only because they are mentioned in the Vedas. For instance they give the example 'cow' is mentioned in the Vedas, that is why cow exists. It's sort of knowledge and even being in its archetypal form.

___: It's a bit like a platonic ...

S: Yes, which is all right up to a point except that they identify it with the existing Vedas. And therefore, everything in the Vedas is regarded as unquestionable, and absolutely authoritative, including of course the division of humanity into castes; that also is of Vedic

origin. Anyway, that is somewhat by the way. (Pause.)

S: So I was saying, the Buddha as he went about, he encountered many people, many men who were brahmanas, who had, gone forth. So he encountered them. He seems to have encountered them more frequently, or at least more deeply, than any other sort of person, and he taught them, they were impressed by the Dharma, and then they went for refuge. So, if you were a shramana and you had been impressed by the teaching of the Buddha and you went for refuge to the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha, well obviously you became a follower of the Buddha and you continued your general shramana way of life. And that sort of person is what afterwards became a bhikkhu. Do you see the development? It was not as though the Buddha started off as it were by saying [177] everybody has got to be a bhikkhu, everyone has got to be a monk. But in the course of His travelling and teaching he encountered people who were already leading this homeless life and when they took refuge in Him, when they became His followers, they continued to follow that particular life-style. On the other hand, there were others who didn't do so. There were others, very often Brahmins, followers of the brahminic ideal, as well as ordinary householders following various trades and occupations and professions, whom also the Buddha encountered, who also were impressed by His teaching, who also took refuge in Him, and became His followers but continued their previous life-style except that they gave up anything which was contradictory to the teaching. For instance, if they were Brahmins engaged in sacrifice, they gave that up. But apart from that they continued their previous life-style, continued to stay at home with their wives and families and their usual occupation. They became the 'upasakas', but you see how the distinction developed? It was not that the Buddha so much as said 'well there shall be two kinds of follower: a bhikkhu follower and an upasaka follower.' What happened was that the Buddha or the Dharma encountered these two different kinds of people and after they had gone for refuge, each continued to follow his already existing life-style with suitable modifications. So in this way, what we call 'monks', what we call 'lay people' arose. But that was more due to the existing socio-religious circumstances than to anything in the Buddha's teaching itself. Except that of course, the Buddha Himself was following the way of life of the homeless wanderer so that if you wanted close contact with Him well, you had to become a homeless wanderer too. So, many who were following the path of the householder, upon going for refuge to the Buddha-Dharma-Sangha, did actually change their lifestyle in order to be closer to the Buddha and more like the Buddha. And of course there is the other consideration that if you are a wanderer, a full-timer, if you are not a householder then you have got more time for meditation, studying the Dharma, and so on. So certainly the emphasis was much more on being the homeless wanderer, but the division between the two was not as it were, in principle, inherent in the Buddha's teaching.

___: There doesn't seem to be so much distinction between the two in the Pali Canon.

S: Yes. For instance upasaka followers are represented as coming to the Buddha and making suggestions for changing the rules for the disciples who were wanderers. In a modern Buddhist country that would be unthinkable. It would be regarded as highly impertinent for the lay people to suggest any such thing but the Buddha frequently accepted these suggestions.

Mangala: This distinction as far as we are concerned now, even, so much reversed now, isn't it, because in a sense you said that us as upasakas are in fact spiritually full-timers.

S: Yes, actually it's a pity that we don't have just a word for someone who goes for refuge and, as it were, becomes as we say, a member of the order. Really this distinction of monk and layman has broken down. You know sometimes I give the example of 'followers' but in some Buddhist countries today, you have, say, someone who is technically an upasaka. He is not a monk in the sense he has not been ordained as a bhikkhu, he has not received a bhikkhu ordination, but let's say he is a bachelor, he is living in a meditation centre and [178] he is teaching meditation full-time. Now according to the Buddhism of that particular country, he is an upasaka, he is not a bhikkhu. So he is treated as an upasaka, he does not get the respect that a bhikkhu gets formally, and so on and so forth. On the other hand you might have someone who was a bhikkhu and who had received a bhikkhu ordination and who was teaching Sinhalese in a local college, on a salary, with a professor's quarters, or a lecturer's quarters and not meditating and not leading a spiritual life at all, but he is technically a bhikkhu and he will have to be respected by the upasaka. He will not show the upasaka any respect, the upasaka will have to show him respect. So in this way you see the system begins to break down because the distinction of upasaka and bhikkhu is not of lifestyle any more, but just the technical ordination that they have received. And there is no emphasis in many countries any longer of, in many Buddhist countries, on the significance of the 'going for refuge'. So this is where we ourselves emphasize the 'Going for Refuge' so much. And if you go for refuge and you are a member of the Order, your particular life-style, provided it is not conflicting with the principles of the Dharma, is relatively insignificant. Do you see what I am getting at? So in a way it's a bit anomalous that we even, or that you even, call yourselves 'upasakas', or I call you 'upasakas' because really we want a third term that just means 'gone for refuge', whether they are wanderer or whether they are living at home with wife and family even provided they really have gone for refuge, these other distinctions are quite unimportant.

Mangala: Is there no word that comes close in Pali or Sanskrit?

S: Actually there isn't. You have 'Sarangathi' which means 'one who has gone for refuge' - refugee quite literally. You are a 'refugee'. But what has happened in many Buddhist countries is that the Buddhist life has been identified with a particular pattern irrespective of whether it's an expression of your genuine individual going for refuge. Of course if you do genuinely and sincerely 'go for refuge' the chances seem to be that you will insensibly move from the 'householder' life-style, to the 'wanderer' life-style. But there are many intermediate degrees. (Pause.)

So, as regards this question of the intermediate degrees, you can have, say, someone who is, let's say in this case, a member of the Order - who has actually gone for refuge but, he may or she may be, a married person with wife and family or husband and family, with a conventional job but which is a matter of right livelihood, and is, as it were, part and parcel of ordinary society, but nevertheless committed and devoting himself or herself to their individual spiritual development. So this is, as it were, one extreme. Then you've got the other extreme, say, of someone who has gone for refuge, and has got no wife, no family, no secular employment, who is fully devoted either to meditation or to teaching the Dharma, or working at a particular centre, that's the other extreme. And then you've got all the different intermediate degrees. You've got, say, someone who has got just a part-time job, but he doesn't have a wife and family, but he has a girlfriend that he sees occasionally. So that's a sort of intermediate phase. So, in between these you've got various sub-stages. But the important thing is that everybody has gone for refuge and everybody is working on his or her

own spiritual development. Everybody is in contact with other Order members, who have gone for refuge and so on,

So, it's the going for refuge which is the central and most important factor. Lifestyle is relatively secondary, even though, as you implement your going for refuge more and more, lifestyle will tend to change, where change is possible.

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So, upasakas are really only upasakas in the sense that they have not received the technical bhikkhu ordination. But many upasakas are obviously much more like the bhikkhu of the Buddha's day than many people in Buddhist countries who've got this bhikkhu ordination and had it for years and years. So probably sooner or later we will even have to drop the term upasaka because if you go to a Buddhist country and say you are an 'upasaka', then they take you to mean you are a sort of born Buddhist, who takes a very sort of moderate interest in Buddhism if any, turns up for the Wesak celebration once or twice a year and occasionally invites some bhikkhus for a meal. This is what upasaka means there, this is the average upasaka, I mean they are very devoted in a way, but not taking (their) Buddhism very seriously, and not really understanding what 'Going for Refuge' means.

Anyway, let's get back to the Sutta of Cunda the Smith. So, Cunda wants to know how many kinds of shramanas there really are. So he (Cunda) says, or he asks 'Cunda the Smith spake thus: still Sage of wisdom wise, awake with craving one, master of Dharma; man supreme, chief charioteer, about recluses' (that is 'shramanas') 'here I ask, how many be? I beg Him tell me thus.'

Let's look at some of these epithets of the Buddha.

First of all the Buddha of course which means 'one who knows', basically. Then 'dhammassanim'. 'Dhammassanim' is the master or lord, the 'swami of Dharma. 'Vitanham', 'one who has destroyed' craving, who has no craving. 'Diputtamam'. This is a term you get very often in Buddhist literature, it means 'the best of those with two feet.' Or it's often translated 'the best of bipeds', or the best of human beings. The Buddha is the best of human beings, the best of those with two feet. So this in a way is quite important. It makes it clear that the Buddha is a human being, the Buddha has two feet, as it were, he is a man. But he is the best of men. He represents humanity at its highest. The Buddha is the embodiment of the ideal man - it makes that perfectly clear. (Pause.) Then 'sarathinam pavaram'. 'Sarathi' is the charioteer, 'pavaram' is best, the most eminent; the best of charioteer. But in what sense do you think is the Buddha called 'charioteer'?

___: One who 'leads', or is master ... of the senses ...

S: Yes... It is that but it isn't used so much in that sense as in the sense of someone who guides others. In the invocation to the Buddha there is:

'Iti'pi so bhagava araham samma-sambuddho
vijja-carana sampanno sugato
loka-vidu, anuttaro purisa-damma-sarati'

'the charioteer of men who are to be tamed.' So it suggests that 'charioteering' is the leading or

guiding of others on the right path. If you were a warrior, and if you were in a chariot, you didn't guide the horses yourself, you had a charioteer to do it for you while you fought. So the Buddha is a charioteer in that sort of sense. He guides you while you fight. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna is the 'sarathi', the charioteer for arjuna ... do you remember? But he is also a sort of guru figure, even God. (Pause.) I mean from the Iliad we are familiar with the idea of a charioteer guiding the horses, driving the horses while you fight. In a way it's a very good comparison because the charioteer is side by side with you in the chariot, but he does not fight. The fighting has to be done by you, but he guides the horses, he, as it were, shows the way, but you have to fight. He is there in the thick of the battle with you but he is not concerned with the battle, he just shows the way, he has fought his battle.

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___: 'Navigator':

S: (?)

___: Navigator?

S: 'Navigator', yes. But he is not as it were directing operations from base camp. He is there with you in the midst of it, side by side with you. So this also one might say, links up, or ties up, very well with the idea of the Kalyana Mitra, the 'good friend.' he is there with you in the midst of it all; he helps you, he shows you the way; he guides you. You have to do all the fighting. You have to do your own fighting; he can't do it for you. But he is there with you. He is there as it were shoulder to shoulder with you, giving you his companionship or his moral support or the benefit of his advice, and his guidance (too). But you must make the effort, you must tread the way. (Pause.) So this sort of suggests very well the whole Buddhist attitude towards the kalyana mitra, but it is someone more experienced than you, he is someone who knows a bit more than you, even very much more than you. But he is not some sort of remote god-like figure. He is there as it were in the midst of the battle of life side by side with you.

Last night, or the night before last, someone was talking with me and saying that she had been reading about Bhagwan Rajneesh and she was asking me about him and about his demand for personal surrender. And she was asking me how I felt about this because Bhagwan Rajneesh apparently demands that if you join with him, then you have to surrender totally to him, which means you have to do exactly what he tells you to do without any sort of questioning. So she was asking well how Buddhism felt about this. And I said that the Buddhist attitude was that this sort of surrender to a living human being was completely undesirable, that one surrendered in that sort of way only to the Buddha. That's what the Going for Refuge meant. But one does not surrender in that sort of way to the kalyana mitra. The kalyana mitra is a good friend, who is side by side with you and showing you the way. But you do your own fighting, you don't surrender to the kalyana mitra. So, this is a very different sort of attitude.

: Sometimes they have in Tibet, they have the four refuges, with refuge to the lama.

S: Yes, but they also make it very clear that by the lama, they mean the Buddha. They see the Buddha, as it were, in the lama. If you don't see the Buddha in the lama then you can't go for refuge to the lama. You don't go for refuge to the lama as a sort of ordinary human being as it were, but only to the extent that he reflects the Buddha - or only to the extent that you see the

Buddha in him.

: It's rather strange that the fourth refuge should have been produced really.

S: Well in a sense it wasn't. There are six refuges. There are nine refuges. There are twelve refuges. There are many refuges, but at the very beginning what was introduced was an esoteric aspect of each of the three refuges. So there was an esoteric Buddha refuge, esoteric Dharma refuge, esoteric Sangha refuge. So what were these? I use the word 'esoteric' but don't take it too seriously. The Buddha refuge was your own teacher, in what sense? - you haven't [181] seen the Buddha, but you have seen your own teacher. The Buddha is not actually, he himself, personally teaching you, but it's your own teacher who is teaching you, so in that way you are very close to your own teacher. And certainly within the context of Tibetan Buddhism, the Buddha means your own teacher because that is your immediate source of contact with the Dharma, especially within the context of the oral tradition, that's where you get it from. I mean, your teacher gets it from his teacher, his teacher gets it from his, and so on back to the Buddha. But your point of contact is with your own teacher. So in a general way, yes, you go for refuge to the Buddha, but more specifically, no, you go for refuge to your own teacher, but only to the extent that the teacher reflects or embodies or hands on the tradition of the Buddha Himself.

For instance you might read the scriptures: the scriptures contain the teaching of the Buddha. But supposing you don't understand them, supposing you feel there is a contradiction, who are you going to ask? You can't ask the Buddha, you have to ask your own teacher. So in that sense the teacher is a more specific, concrete and immediate form of the Buddha. In that sense the guru refuge is the esoteric form of the Buddha refuge.

___: Bhante ... taken the other way and for instance in the Avalokitesvara and Tara meditations one goes for refuge to the guru in the form of Amitabha and also of course in the Refuge Tree you have the founder of the particular line in the middle of it.

S: But then he is conceived of as the embodiment of all the Buddhas. So it's the Buddha that you are going for refuge to in that particular form, or all the Buddhas even in that particular form. So you still go for refuge to the Buddha, your primary, your basic refuge, is to the Buddha, or Buddhahood.

___: So in that view - the Buddha twice, (in the form of?) Amitabha, Avalokitesvara, but then, where does the idea of the guru comes?

S: You mean the guru as guru?

___: The guru as guru, yes.

S: Ah, well that comes in the immediate teaching situation. If you are meditating and if you are say going for refuge to the refuge tree, then you are going for refuge primarily to the Buddha whether in the form of Padmasambhava or Milarepa or Tsongkhapa or whatever.

___: Mister Chen says if you can surrender to the guru in the same way as to the Buddha you will become instantly enlightened!

S: Well, it depends on what you mean in 'the same way as'. You can surrender to the guru in the same way as to the Buddha only if the guru is the Buddha.

In a way the Buddha is the guru, because this is the aspect under which primarily we see the Buddha as a source of instruction, the source of teaching, the source of inspiration, the source of guidance, the exemplar and so on, but very often if we think of the Buddha as the human historical or the Buddha of the scriptures, that's too general, that's too remote. We may have a specific problem, or specific question. We want a specific answer which we don't get from the [182] scriptures, so we have to ask the specific Buddha, i.e. the guru, for light on that particular problem.

___: How does it all relate to this question of the woman and the Rajneesh teaching? I mean, if the Rajneesh teacher is asking her to ...

S: Ah, he was asking her, in fact asking everybody, to absolutely surrender to him.

___: Rather than it coming from, rather than it happening the other way round?

S: Well no, my point was that as far as I knew, and I have met Rajneesh in India, he was just not able to accept that sort of surrender and if he did both he and others will sooner or later get into difficulties. If he himself is, you know, enlightened as the Buddha well, fair enough; but if you aren't and you ask some other human being to surrender totally to you, that's completely catastrophic. So therefore I said the Buddhist attitude is that it's much better and safer, as it were, to surrender only to the Buddha, and not ask anybody to surrender in that absolute sort of way, unconditional sort of way, to any living human being or any living human teacher. It's too much to ask and it's too much to take upon oneself.

___: The period you talk about in your memoirs in which you subordinated your will to your teacher and would you have described that as surrender?

S: No, not at all. First of all I knew that particular person very well. I knew that he was very humble, that he was not egotistic, and I was thinking in terms of just the ordinary every day happenings of life, like well we should do this or not do that. Not what thoughts I should think or anything of that sort, in fact as I made clear earlier on, he was very tolerant in this respect and didn't attempt to influence me in any way. But, that was certainly not absolute surrender in the Rajneesh sense. And also I decided to do it myself, he never suggested it, he never even knew about it, I didn't even tell him. He might have just noticed I was a bit more amenable than usual.

___: It was more of a training principle than an end in itself.

S: Yes indeed, yes. It's something I decided to do myself, something which he never suggested. In fact he, even if it ever would have occurred to him he probably would not have agreed ... But as I said to this particular person it's really dangerous to ask some other human being to surrender absolutely to you.

___: What about Milarepa with Marpa?

S: Well he did believe that Marpa was fully enlightened - the Buddha Himself, so in that

sense all right.

___: Did he believe it at the beginning in the sense of being capable of seeing what that meant when he (?) the house?

S: I think in Milarepa's case he just was so desperate that he clutched at anything that was going to help. And he realized what sins he had committed, and that he needed help, he needed to get out, otherwise the retribution of those sins was going to be really [183] terrible. Anyway that's the esoteric Buddha refuge, what about the esoteric Dharma refuge? That is said to be the Yidam, the particular Buddha or bodhisattva form or figure that you actually meditate upon regularly. That is the Dharma for you for all practical purposes. That is say the specific form of the ideal which you try actually to absorb, or into which you try to absorb yourself, to assimilate. That's the Dharma for you. So it is not a matter of words or teaching in that sense, but of the living ideal in the form that you are actually trying to realize it. Even Buddhahood is too vague, too general, you need to think in terms of Tara, or you need to think in terms of Avalokitesvara or Shakyamuni. That makes it much more vivid, and it is that which is your real Dharma. So the esoteric aspect of the Dharma is the living ideal as embodied in a specific form.

___: Is that where it (runs) with your own direct path to the Sambhogakaya or your own easiest path to the Sambhogakaya?

S: It might do. But in a way there isn't a direct path to the Sambhogakaya there is only a direct path to the Dharmakaya. Once you realize the Dharmakaya the Sambhogakaya and the Nirmanakaya are automatically there. So, this draws attention to the fact that when you take refuge in the Dharma you don't take refuge so much in a particular teaching or philosophy or set or rules or anything like that, or even practices, but in a particular ideal which you are doing your best to assimilate, an ideal which is a living ideal.

___: So you are taking refuge in the Dharma or as the yidam endeavouring to live in the presence of the Buddha's and so ... being guided by that awareness all the time ...

S: And become like the Buddha's as it were.

And then thirdly, there is the esoteric Sangha refuge, and that is usually said to be the (Khadomah?) or the Dakini or the spiritual companion. This of course is open to enormous misunderstanding.

___: What's the (Khadomah?)

S: The Sanskrit is the 'kachari', it means 'sky-walker'. Also 'dakini' means the same thing. Dakini is from (drik?) which means space. The 'space one', or 'spaced-out one' if you like (Laughter). So what is meant by this? The Dakini, the esoteric aspect of the Sangha refuge, is the spiritually stimulating companion in whose company you practise the Dharma. And here of course the sexual symbolism rears its misleading head. You must not assume that by that is meant the young lady you take along to meditation class with you, and with whom you go back afterwards. That isn't what is meant at all. But the, as it were, sexual symbolism, because the Dakini is feminine gender, conveys someone who you find spiritually stimulating. Just in the same way a man finds a woman sexually stimulating. If a woman is in

front of you well, there is a sort of reaction because there is a polarization, he feels stimulated. So the dakini, the spiritual companion is the sort of person who by their very presence makes you feel somewhat stimulated. You feel like practising the Dharma; the fact that they are practising it helps you to practise it. So I think for us it's probably much better to think in terms of other members of the Order.

So the spiritual companion, the dakini or daka, simply means those [184] few people within the Order by whom you feel particularly stimulated. Say, with whom you particularly like to meditate with or to go away on retreat with, not just out of personal attachment or affection, though that may also be there, but just because you feel so stimulated when they are around. You all know quite well that some Order members are more stimulating than others, or some are less stimulating than others, for you at least. I think you have to be very careful to, in the case of Order members of the opposite sex, not to confuse this with a sort of sexual stimulation, and just feeling sort of a bit better in a more ordinary sort of way, just because you've got that stimulating company in another sense. It's definitely the spiritual stimulation that is meant here.

So that's your real Sangha refuge. Your real Sangha refuge is, well just being with those other committed people whose presence and companionship naturally inspires you and stimulates you. I mean the bodhisattvas are the ideal Sangha but you don't see them except occasionally you get glimpses in meditation.

: Has it necessarily got to be someone, putting this not too well, I'll say just what's on my mind, someone, has it got to be someone who is in the Order?

S: Well that is what one would naturally expect. If one can be spiritually stimulated by someone else, well what are they doing outside? (laughter) you ought to have introduced them to classes and the Movement long ago!

: I was just thinking of the two people that I am sharing lodgings with.

S: Well, perhaps you can be stimulated by just the companionship of people who are part of the Movement even though they may not yet be within the Order, just because they happen to be as it were, at hand, and you are in regular contact with them. I mean the Order members, those sort of sublime and spiritual, well they are like the remote bodhisattvas, you only see them once in a way. You need regular companionship and regular stimulation.

: Where would the esoteric and exoteric refuges - obviously there are other aspects, other obvious variations - I mean are there other forms to take the refuges in; is it better to stick to one form all the time or to try to ...?

S: No, I think it's better just to take in the one form to keep it as simple as possible, but realize there is the richness of the implications there are; realize how many implications there are. But you can see that it's not really esoteric refuges, it's more concrete form, more directly relevant to you as an individual and your individual needs. This is what it's really getting at.

: 'Esoteric' is what it really means.

S: Yes. What it really means in cash terms as it were. (Laughter) You may have a sort of

cheque for a million dollars, but supposing the banks aren't open, and you can't cash it, what use is it to you? It's better to have 50p in your pocket. (Pause.) Or may be the bank is going to open in a million years. You can cash the cheque then but what about today? So, it's as though this sort of teaching says, that, yes, you go for refuge to the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha, but in practice, if you really get into [185] difficulties the Buddha means your own teacher. In practice the Dharma means the actual ideal you hold before yourself, especially in meditation, all the time. And the Sangha means those people that you are in regular contact with and who inspire you and help to keep you going. It's just like that, it's really quite simple and concrete and practical.

___: Just thinking about the dakinis on another level - in the Cremation Ground lecture, you talk of the dakinis as the psycho-spiritual forces within one's own depths. Could one link that with the taking refuge in a way in one's own inner forces?

S: Well sure, one can and one should but, sometimes your own inner forces are dormant and you can't get them very easily, functioning and contact with other people whose energies are themselves aroused and who can stimulate you, is very, very, helpful. That's what is being got at here.

Anyway we've got quite a way away from this. This was all in connection with the best of charioteers.

___ 'About recluses here I ask, how many be?
___ I beg Him (that is the Enlightened One) tell me that.'

So then the Buddha says:

'Four, Chunda, without fifth' the Master thus replied.
'Then I reveal to thee as testament when asked,
Way conqueror, way herald, wayfarer, fraud of way.'

Let's see what those are in Pali.

'maggajino, maggadesako, magge jivati, maggadusi.'

We will see what those terms mean as we come to them. So Chunda asks another question.
'Chunda the Smith then says:

'Way conqueror, whom call the wake? Way muser, how
incomparable? When asked, way farer, limn to me,
fraud of the way reveal.'

So the Buddha now explains in detail, relatively, what he means by each of these four kinds of samana. (Pause.)

'Immune to barbs, doubt crossed, delighting in the cool,
nought coveting, the guide of world and gods, the
wake, call Him 'Way Conqueror.'

So the 'Way Conqueror' is 'maggajina'; the one who has conquered the way. So, what do you think the Buddha is saying here? What sort of 'samana' is he describing really here?

___: The Arahant.

S: The Arahant really. The one who has reached the end of the way, the one who has conquered the way, or mastered the way? And he gives various characteristics. He says: 'immune to barbs' or 'barb immune' it's sometimes translated. The 'barb' here is the barb of craving. It's sort of imagined as an arrow head, sticking in you that you've got to pluck out, which is very difficult to [186] pluck out. 'Doubt crossed'; why does he have no doubt? He has no doubt because he knows. If you know, how can there be doubt? He knows because he has reached the end of the way, he is enlightened. So he has crossed over all doubt. 'Delighting in the cool'. Or there is the other translation, it says 'Nirvana is bliss enjoying'; delighting in the extinction of all passions. 'Nought coveting', completely free from craving, and grasping. 'The guide of world and gods'. 'Lokassa sadevakassa neta'. The 'neta' is the guide. The Wake call him 'way conqueror. So the arahant, the one who has reached the goal, who has come to the end of the path, he is the 'way conqueror': he is the first kind of sramana.

Mangala: I don't understand the verse before that.

S: Which one?

Mangala: 'Chunda the Smith then said 'Way conqueror whom call the wake'?

S: Yes. The Buddha has said 'the way conqueror' and so on, so Chunda is saying 'well that's not enough just to tell me the names, tell me what the names mean, what constitutes the 'Way Conqueror what constitutes the 'Way Herald', what constitutes the 'Way Farer', what constitutes the 'Fraud of Way', that's what he is asking. Then the Buddha describes each of them in a separate verse, in greater detail. In His first reply the Buddha only enumerates the names of the four kinds of sramanas. So then Chunda asks 'well, what are these kinds of sramanas?' You have mentioned their names but how can they be recognized? Please describe them to me.

Mangala: He also uses the term 'Way Muser'.

S: Ah, well we are coming to that in the next verse.

___: To 'limn'?

S: 'To limn', to paint, literally, to depict, to describe.

___: (define) these words ... I feel he is not writing English at all.

S: Well, that's the influence of the good Mrs Rhys Davids, and her Anglo-Saxonisms.

___: Anglo-Saxon?

Vangisa: We are really going to have to get down to re-translating or ... 'Way Conqueror whom call the Wake'...

___: What's the 'Wake', is that the Buddha?

S: It's the Buddha. Who is it that the Buddha, the Enlightened One describes as a 'Way Conqueror'? What sort of person is he? That's what Chunda is asking. So the Buddha's answer in this following verse is that the 'Way Conqueror' is virtually the Arahant, the one who has reached the end of the Way. All right, what about the next one?

[187]

'Who you'd most, as yond most here knows,
who Dharma here proclaims,
explains, still sage, doubt-cutter,
Him they call 'Way Herald', second monk.'

All right, 'Way Herald', this is the 'dharmadesiko', the other translation gives 'way preacher'. 'Desana' is 'exposition'. So 'magga-desako' is really 'one who expounds the Way', in a sense the one who teaches the Way; 'Way Teacher' would probably be the best.

So the Arahant teaches, but here teaching is particularly mentioned. Why do you think this is? The second kind is specifically described as 'one who teaches the Way', the second kind of sramana.

Mangala: You said once, I think, in respect to the guru, a guru isn't a teacher, he may teach or may not teach, not necessarily; whereas a teacher does actually teach, that is his function...

S: Yes, right. So in a way that is quite a thought, isn't it? In other words you could also, almost say, the teacher is one who is still learning. The Buddha, the teacher with a capital 'T', does not necessarily teach. Here in the case of 'maggadesika' it's clearly verbal teaching which is meant. A Buddha has got other ways of teaching. He may teach! I mean a Buddha also can teach verbally but he is not limited to that, he is not confined to that. So it would not be correct to describe Him simply as a teacher; he is more than a teacher in a sense of verbal exposition. But it's quite correct to describe the next most advanced kind of sramana as a teacher of the Way, because he can certainly teach the Way, he has got quite an experience of the Way, but he can't communicate in these non-verbal ways, as a Buddha can, at least not to the same extent. There is also the point that we learn by teaching. I expect quite a few of you have found that in the course of the last year or two that we learn by teaching. In fact I used to say, that we don't really start to learn until we start to teach because then you really have to examine your ideas. You really how to sort of know where you are - and where you are not. So it's quite appropriate that the highest kind of sramana is not described as a teacher, though he does clearly teach, that is mentioned, but the second highest kind is described specifically as a teacher. In a sense he has to be a teacher because he is still got something to learn. The Arahant, he doesn't have to be a teacher, he only has to be a teacher if there are people around and they need to be taught, but he himself, for himself, doesn't need to be a teacher. But the next best kind of sramana in a sense needs to be a teacher, because it's through the teaching of others that things become clear or clearer, to himself. (pause) He is also described as a 'muni' which means a silent one which suggests he doesn't talk unnecessarily even though he teaches verbally. Then there is the point that Chunda in his question, uses the expression 'Way muser' as a synonym for the second kind of sramana. This is 'maggajhayin'. This in a way is quite interesting. There are these two terms for the second best kind of sramana: the one who teaches the Path, and 'maggajhayin' which can't be translated at all. You have all heard, I

know, of the four 'jhanas', or in Sanskrit 'dhyanas'. So 'jhana' is the higher state of consciousness. 'Jhana' is a noun. But originally the word was used more in its verbal form that is as a verb; the verb is 'jhayati' which Mrs Rhys Davids and co-translated as 'muse'; you could translate it as 'meditate' - except that 'meditate' has got the connotations of sort of thinking about, or reflecting. But 'jhayati'; if you say 'he jhayatis', or the Buddha 'jhayatis', or the monk 'jhayatis', it means he becomes actively [188] absorbed, or actively engages in higher states of consciousness, the so-called 'jhanas'. So this 'maggajhayi - 'jhayi' means the person who is, as it were, meditatively absorbed in the Way, who is identified with the Way, who lives the Way, who is the embodiment of the Way. So when he teaches, because he is also 'maggadasiko', when he teaches he teaches out of his experience of the Way, even though that is not as yet the complete or full experience, but he teaches, as it were, out of his experience of that Way: out of his living the Way; not just out of his theoretical studies of it. This is what is suggested here. So this is a very interesting expression this 'maggajhayi', the one who meditates the Way, who lives the Way; who is immersed in the Way; absorbed in the Way; identifies with the Way.

___: This is someone who is then very definitely on the transcendental path, as it were.

S: That is not specifically stated, but one could say that; that this may well be, say, the stream-entrant. But that correlation is not actually made in the text.

___: It seems to come across quite strongly. (Pause.)

S: So 'Way Muser', as though you are just sitting down in a quiet corner sort of gently, dreamily thinking about following the way - this is very sort of inadequate.

___: It seems to suggest that the first dhyana particularly in which there is discursive activity...

S: Yes, you could possibly at a stretch, use it for the first dhyana but certainly not for any of the others. Even for the first dhyana it does not convey the energy and the effort that are very often needed.

Vangisa: The word 'muse', you usually think of in association with (poetry?)

S: Yes rather (?)

Vangisa: It's quite extraordinary that someone deliberately has chosen these words - that means they couldn't do better; (?) not too bad (?)

S: Well, we see what that is in Pali in a minute.

'Who liveth in the Way, the well-taught dharma path;
alert, restrained, and treads the blameless path,
third monk; 'Way-farer', him they call.'

'Way-farer, him they call.' That is the 'Maggajivim'; 'maggajivi(m). So this is the conscientious practiser. You notice he is not teaching he has not got to that point yet. 'Who liveth in the Way', that is who practises the Way, who practises 'the well-taught dharma path.'

'Alert, restrained'; 'alert' suggests mindful, 'restrained': self-controlled, 'and treads the blameless path'. Third monk, way-farer him they call'. I don't know why he translates 'way-farer' because it is 'maggajivi(m) in the text, and the Buddha uses 'bhikkhu' here rather than samana. [189] Yes, yes; but 'Tathagata' is certainly not used here. You get the idea here of the conscientious monk or disciple who is trying very hard to follow, to practise, the teaching; who is conscientious, who is aware and mindful, but who certainly has not yet come to the point where he can really start teaching others, even as a means of helping himself. But he is practising. (Pause.)

Then the fourth 'who cloaked in piety is forward (?),
'boaster, cheats of clansmen, unrestrained,
a babbler, masked in mode, they call him Fraud of Way.'

'Dusi'; 'maggadusi'. 'Dusi' is not really 'fraud', is more like one who 'spoils'. And what is translated as 'masked in mode' is 'mayavi'. 'Mayavi' means really, a 'deceiver'. 'Maya' of course is magical illusion, which of course you are deceived by the illusion, because you think it's real. In the same way, you think it's a real samana, but he isn't, he only looks like one.

Mangala: A bit (inaudible?)

___: It reminds me of Lewis Carroll.

S: The translator manages to make his English lines shorter even than the Pali ones. I mean it's very condensed Anglo-Saxon type of English, very monosyllabic.

So you have quite clearly these four types of samana. The one who has completely mastered the Way, who is now enlightened. The one who is still learning through teaching, And then the one who is just practising; he has not even got to the point of learning through teaching. And lastly, the one who only pretends to be a samana, who is making no effort of any kind whatsoever, who is just a disgrace as it were.

Vangisa: Just quite a diversion, about the verse form, it seems to be ten-syllabic, not just ... simply syllabic. Is that correct, ten syllables in each line?

S: There is eleven in one line anyway; there is nine in another one. But it's not strict metre. Let me read in Pali if I can, it's not very easy in Pali.

'Pucchami munim pahutapahnam
iti Cundo kammaraputto
Buddham dhammassamim vitatanham
dipaduttamam sarathinam pavaram;
kati loke samana, tad imgha bruhi~.'

Caturo samana, na pancamo 'tthi,
Cunda ti Bhagava
te te avikaromi sakkhiputtho:
maggajino maggadesako ca,
magge jivati, yo ca maggadusi.

Kam maggajinam vadanti buddha,
iti Cundo kammaraputto
maggajjhaya katham atulyo hoti,
magge jivati me bruhi puttho,
atha me avikarohi maggadusim.'

Yo tinnakatharikatho visallo
nibbanabhirato ananugiddho
lokassa sadevakassa neta,
tadim maggajinam vadanti buddha.

[190] 'Paramam paraman ti yo 'dha natva
akkhati vibhajati idh' eva dhammam,
tam kamkhacchidam munim anejam
dutyam bhikkhunam ahu maggadesim.'

(Transcriber's note: some lines in each stanza contain Cunda's name and appear in the above transcript of the Pali, but Bhante did not read them. Either because they did not appear in his version or for some other reason. I have included them here. I believe they mean simply 'Cunda is thus asking the Buddha', or something to that effect.)

S: (returning to above text) So there is a regular metre, isn't there? dah-dit-dit-dah-dit,
dah-dit-dit dah-dit, yes, like that.

So 'Four Chunda without fifth, the Master thus replied'. This is much too staccato, isn't it, to reproduce the original, it is not sufficiently 'springly' or flowing.

Vangisa: It would be so easy to reproduce that (?)

S: Any query or comment on the whole thing?

Vangisa: I think that this was the same Chunda which we are familiar with...

S: I don't know; it may be or it may not be.

Vangisa: Wasn't he a smith?

S: Yes, yes. (Pause.)

Mangala: There is still another verse.

S: Is there?

Mangala: Well, there is in the ...

S: Oh sorry, yes, there is the concluding verse; let's go on to that.

'And the shrewd householder, wise aryan listener,
perceiveth them, knows all as such,

and seeing this his faith wanes not,
for how could he confound no fraud with fraud,
cleansed with the unclean.

So the Buddha concludes by saying that the 'shrewd householder', 'the wise aryan listener' perceives these four kinds of sramana. He understands them for what they are. 'And seeing this his faith wanes not.' What do you think that means? Why does his faith not wane? 'iti disva na hapeti tassa saddha' 'this having seen his faith does not wane.' Having seen these four kinds of people his faith does not wane, or having understood that there are these four kinds or samana, his faith does not wane. His faith in what, do you think?

___: His own knowledge...

S: Well you could say his faith in the spiritual life, or his faith in the Buddha-Dharma and Sangha. Because supposing, you know, he had seen only the worst kind of samana, then maybe his faith would [191] be very disturbed. But even if he sees just one kind, he knows that there are others. So his faith isn't disturbed, he knows there are different levels of attainment.

___: They represent a sort of graduation of the path too, one can say that there is a possibility of progression. You also if one met the person furthest along, it might be difficult to feel any connection...

S: anything in common.

S: Right. That's why sometimes you have to be quite careful to sort of obscure your own life so that you don't dazzle people too much. Like if you sort of meet some new person and they ask you what you are doing and how a typical Buddhist lives, and you say 'oh, well, we don't eat meat and we don't have any sex and we don't go to the cinema and we don't drink wine of course, we spent most of the day meditating and are always going on retreats, and they think 'Buddhism is not for me'. (Laughter) So you have to be very modest and say, well, yes I am a vegetarian, but I am not all that strict and, we do have the odd drink, and well yeah I've got one girlfriend left you know (laughter) and you make it seem more comfortable as it were. And then he thinks 'well, you know, may be I could be a Buddhist too.

So what you say is very correct. That's why also perhaps we need within the Order different kinds of upasakas. On certain occasions we need to be able to trot out our very ascetic upasaka but on certain other occasions we need to be able to trot out a few more worldly looking, conventional upasakas.

___: We have a different use for them.

S: Well it's more than that.

___: Well it's - I have been asked about the Order and in that context, it's very useful to be able to say 'oh yes we've got married order members and in fact...'

S: It's very reassuring, even if there is only one or two left!

___: And I know that it has been quite critical at that point to be able to say something like that.

S: Right, yes. Or that we might come to the point where we have even to ask, not to say 'order' certain people to get married. (laughter) Or it would work out much better that way than if they were left to their own devices.

Mangala: Arranged marriages...

___: Keep them in a museum...

S: Volunteers would not be asked for; names would just go up on a notice board: with the date of the ceremony! But that is quite important you know, it is a sort of matter of skilful means or tact to be able to put across to people the principle for which one stands, even to indicate that 'yes, this is something to be practised' but in the initial stages not make it seem so impossibly remote from ordinary life or not make it seem that you are making impossible demands, if the person is of that [192] kind. I mean there are some people, and here one has to use one's insight, but some people will be stimulated by a great demand, respond very vigorously to that, but not all.

Vangisa: People do need different things, obviously they need different kinds of order members.

S: And usually, if they have a sort of choice they will gravitate to the particular kind of order member that they need. (Inaudible?)

___: I don't know why but I am very amused by that.

___: You just have a strange sense of humour?

___: It paid off.

S: Well you are being ordained at the end of the week.

Right, any general points arising from all this? I think probably then it will be time to stop. We've got a bit of time left. (Pause.)

___: I like the progression, quite struck by that.

S: From the top down to the bottom, the regression really.

___: Yes.

___: It seems to be a very broad spectrum, much broader than at first one suspected. (Pause.)

S: It must have been quite difficult for the ordinary householder in the Buddha's day, well as it is for the ordinary householder in India today even, to know what to make of all these different kinds of wanderer. I mean, some in white robes, some in yellow, some in brown, and some in orange. Some with shaven heads, some with no hair at all. There are some with

thousands of locks all matted together, some naked, some in small loin cloths, some with strings of beads, some carrying sticks, some not carrying sticks. Some with threefold staffs, some with sixfold staffs; some with single staffs, some with bowl, some with (kamandhu?). Some observing silence, some very talkative, some even occasionally with wife and children, but usually without any such impedimenta. But the ordinary householder will wonder what to make of all this; how to sort them out, how to know who the real samanas were, or how many different kinds there were, and so on. And in the Buddha's day there were even more extraordinary than they are now. Some used to grow their finger nails long. Some used to only eat their food only from their hands - some do that even now. There is one very famous sadhu in India when I was there called (Karapatrati-Maharaja?) and he always used to eat his food out of his hands, he would never use a bowl or plate or cup or anything of that kind. He is very very much admired by Hindus, especially orthodox ones, with great influence, a very orthodox Hindu (Karapatraji-Maharaj?) Some monks used to wear cloaks of feathers, not Buddhists, I mean only non-Buddhists. So there is this very motley crowd going around.

Lokamitra: When I was in India I found it very difficult to [193] distinguish between beggars and sadhus, and also it seemed to me a lot of people just left home because it was easier. They could have a nice (?) they were quite free, they could wander around with no clothes and do what they wanted and, no responsibilities, without, I mean I didn't have any insight into this at all but, without necessarily leading a spiritual life.

S: Yes. Certainly all lead a free life, a care free life, but whether it's a spiritual life is another matter. And no doubt you can recruit from such people those who will lead a spiritual life as the Buddha did. I mean in a way it's very much like the old 'hippie' movement, which doesn't seem to be around any more I mean, we ourselves recruited quite a few people from amongst the 'hippies.' But, you know, they themselves as it were, where are they all? What have they done for themselves? Not very much. But if you are leading that sort of lifestyle at least you are free to take up spiritual life. So it seems to be very much like that in the Buddha's day with the sadhus and samanas in general. There were many no doubt who were just seized by a sort of wanderlust.

Lokamitra(?): A point on the 'way herald' or the 'way teacher'. I like the way it's put in that you are not teaching for the welfare of all beings, you are not teaching just for yourself. It seems almost something that one will do.

S: Yes.

: 'natural'...

S: Yes, right. Well, because you can't help coming into contact with people; you can't help getting into discussion with them. It's not that you necessarily go along to Hyde Park Corner and stand on a soapbox and hold forth to the crowds, though you may do that of course. It's more likely that you just get talking in the way of ordinary conversation, ordinary contact with people.

Lokamitra?: I think sometimes we have to be quite careful - you mentioned this in one of the study groups a couple of weeks ago - of talking in terms of the Bodhisattva ideal or thinking in those terms - Enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings - unless we can actually experience that. Otherwise it comes across quite falsely to people.

S: Yes, don't think of yourself too much as being a bodhisattva, even though you are sort of teaching and explaining ...

Vangisa: (Inaudible)

S: Well then you can just explain what the bodhisattva ideal is and leave it at that. (Pause.)

Also there is this expression 'Who yon'd most as yon'd most here knows.' The 'yond most' is Nirvana, and he sees it as something 'yon'd most' as it were the other shore. He sees it as it were, but he also sees that it's something 'out there' to be realized. 'Who yon'd most as yon'd most here knows.' He knows it is not yet attained.

Lokamitra: I took that to mean some sort of insight into the unconditioned as it were, he (?)

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S: Well it is that too. It is an insight into the unconditioned, but you see the unconditioned still as an object 'out there', not yet fully realized by you. You don't deceive yourself in just thinking that you have realized it already. It is still 'yon'd most' for you, it's still 'over there', even though you have insight into it. This is what suggests the stream-entrant. He certainly has a vision of the unconditioned or of the yonder most bit he hasn't yet fully come to it. (Long pause.)

In a way this is relevant to us in the sense that even in this country we find all sorts of people turning up, all sorts of teachers, swamis, yogis, lamas, and sometimes we need to do a bit of sorting out and just ask ourselves well, just exactly where do they all stand. And we must not necessarily swallow everything that we are told or that we hear. You get all sorts of people. May be some who are very good, experienced, and who really have something to say, something to offer. But others are just globe-trotters, doing a quick round-the-world tour. They will go back to their own friends and admirers in their own country, describing how they have gone round the world, 'preaching' Buddhism, and they become a sort of little village hero. That's quite a different sort of person really. You get all sorts. So we have to be a bit discriminating. Not everybody who arrives from the East is really someone wonderful; may be but also may be not. (pause.) In fact with regard to some people one has to be really careful, some of us know already. (Pause.) Perhaps we can end on that note.

Anyway, discussions on the Order (laughter). (You get the) general idea of it - anything that isn't clear still to anyone? Any comment or suggestions? Any retrospect? Any special reflections or ideas? Bearing in mind that this is our anniversary. It's our Eight Anniversary, isn't it?

Mangala: How many members have we now?

S: We are 72 actually listed and active members, those who keep regularly in touch, not counting those who have sort of dropped out or dropped off (Inaudible).

Mangala: 75 by the end of the week.

S: 75 by the end of the week, maybe eighty by the end of the year, at least.

Anybody experienced any sort of change in the Order? May be the fathers of the Order could

Speak up first.

Vangisa: Hum... that's me.' Well...

S: Eight years is quite a long time.

Vangisa: (Some things) change quite... (I) could describe...

S: Yes, that might be quite interesting because there are several (people) who have come in quite comparatively recently - could you just give a brief resume of the sort of changes that you have seen taking place over these eight years?

Vangisa: There has been so many changes that one can only list them with difficulty. Basically, there has been a definite movement along a line of ... graph! Very much upward line, and it seems to increase all the time. In other words at first it [195] was going along fairly straight; then a long loop which went on for some time; then a notable upward trend, and then more so. Obviously this is going to continue.

S: Are you speaking in terms of numbers, quality or what?

Vangisa: I am speaking in terms of quality, in terms of commitment. I am thinking in terms of understanding, realization, ability, capability, stability, all these things, and not necessarily in that order! Well at the start we were all quite clearly beginners, there was only one real Buddhist around, that was Bhante, with a few enthusiastic would-be Buddhists, we didn't really know what a Buddhist was really! We had had very little experience of them.

S: Well you had barely seen any Buddhists.

Vangisa: Well apart from you now that I think back...

S: Not a whole dozen of them all together as it were.

Vangisa: Never anything of that nature, there was only one - Bhante could not reveal himself to us fully, it had to be done slowly! (laughter) in small doses so as not to frighten everybody off. And Bhante perceived - I was convinced at the time that he didn't really see us at all, but he saw the essential bodhisattva within.' (Vangisa laughs!)

___: May be he did!

Vangisa: May be he did because if he really saw us as we saw ourselves, or as I saw myself, he would have packed up and gone back to Kalimpong straight away! But I don't think any of us were ready at that time for even a relatively mild form and I sometimes think back on the whole process of ordination at that particular time apart from the fact the qualifications demanding the highest qualities we had at that time, were really negligible!

S: (Inaudible).

Vangisa: One had to make the best of what one had. And then there is the ordination itself, I sometimes wonder. In my case it was definitely an experience, a very strong experience, but

whether it really was the same as it now is for people who are ordained, I would not like to say because we just did not know what it was, what it meant...

S: (interrupting) Well there was no Sangha to be ordained into...

Vangisa: Exactly

S: Which was exactly the position of the people in New Zealand, and I said to them quite frankly that you know it will have to be a step in the dark. You are being ordained into something of which you have no experience so there has to be an element of trust. They accepted that.

Vangisa: But they at least did have something.

S: At least they knew there was the Order 'back home' as it were.

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Vangisa: We did not know what the Order was or could be or what it would be...

S: (Interrupting) it could be three of us - there was myself, Akshobhya and Ashvajit. I suppose that at the very first ordinations in England, really there was only me.

Vangisa: That's right, yes. There was no idea of Sangha, because the word 'sangha' still meant to us people who were shaven-headed

S: Bhikkhus away in Ceylon or Burma.

Vangisa: Exactly, and the only kind of Sangha we had ever heard of. In fact I think it took several years for the Order, for a Sangha to really (inaudible?) That idea one had to get across to people by (?) it took several years.

S: The breakthrough seems to have been in '71 to '72.

Vangisa: Yes. And in fact there are very few people left prior to that time, they just couldn't go with the movement (?) ...

S: I mean it was clear despite everything that I said, they still thought and felt in terms of another Buddhist Society.

___: What was the turning point in '71/'72?

S: I think the turning point was the calibre of people that we started attracting and who started being ordained. I think that is when quite a few of you started either coming along or started thinking in terms of ordination. There was a definite breakthrough then. It coincided also very roughly with our move from Sakura to Archway. Things seemed to get very much off the ground then, and quite a few comparatively more capable people became involved and became ordained.

___: Was it also the time of the Noble Eightfold Path lectures?

S: No, they came quite a bit earlier before then. They were the first series I gave. I gave those before the Order came into existence.

___: Oh, really?

S: Yes.

Vangisa: It was the second series.

S: It was the second series, yes; it was in the Autumn of '67, I think. No, the late Winter of '67. In the Autumn it was the (?) nearly the Spring '68, yes.

Vangisa: Aspects of Buddhist Psychology was in the Autumn of 1967.

S: Right, yes. But I've become a bit surprised myself sometimes when I see certain ideas I spelled out very early - for instance I was really shocked, the other day I was going through some old lecture notes from my Kalimpong days, and I found in 1950 I gave a talk in which I clearly spelled out the whole idea there's the Higher Evolution in those very terms, and I had not remembered [197] that I had done it then. Yes, and I was really surprised. It must have been lying dormant in my mind. But the terminology was in use already.

Any other sort of changes you see apart from the depth of commitment? Perhaps the kind of person coming leaving aside, a deeper capacity for commitment or a more dedicated sort of person but, do you see any difference in the kind of person in other ways?

Vangisa: Certainly, the kind of person coming in now is less attached, conditioned, certainly less bourgeois (?) and more resilient; there is a greater sense of inherent independence.

Siddhiratna: It's always struck me that there has been quite a sprinkling, if we are going to go into the types of people, say class of people, say working class people and middle class people, especially in the youth, and I think in a sense that youth - say, from the last war, in fact there is more general kind of youth that does not recognize its parent's classes so readily. I think that's an aspect of our Movement that one can point to a sort of non-class distinction as it were between middle class and working class, or at least they are very blurred.

S: The distinction is very blurred among the people who come here.

Vangisa: I know in boyhood I was thinking more in terms of demanding security, that kind of material security, (and all the other kind of attitude).

S: When I meet the odd person sometimes from the old days I become very much aware how things have changed, and what a very different lot of people I am in contact with now, and I am sort of heartily glad of it. (Pause.) We seem to have much less the intellectual type of Buddhists that we used to get in the Hampstead days.

Vangisa: Perhaps there is one word that sums up the early days in the period before that is 'dilettante'.

S: It occurs to me while we are on it (that) it might be quite a good idea, next year we are

celebrating our tenth anniversary of the Friends. It might be a good idea to get one or two of the older members of the Order to commit some of their reminiscences to paper.

: I have asked Ananda to do that...

S: You have? yes, good. Was Ananda the same 'batch' as you?

: We were both in the first batch.

: And you too.

: Yes.

S: Who else was in the first batch that's still with us?

Vangisa: Well beyond (them) the only other is Sudatta.

: Sudatta, yes. His connection is quite...

S: Tenuous, yes. [198] Does anyone keep up any contact with him? I know that Ananda does a bit. You were going to see him, weren't you?

___: (?) I certainly will, yes.

S: Yes, good.

___: We are planning to invite him to dinner at Aryatara in the very near future.

S: Good.

___: I haven't got his address for Shabda; give me that.

S: But it's interesting to think that in our Hampstead days, if you remember, Sudatta was one of the more as it were, advanced people.

Vangisa: One of the most committed and ...

S: Least conditioned and least tied to conventional ways. But rather sadly, the situation has become completely reversed. Compared with other people who were coming along then, he was almost way out wasn't he?

Vangisa: Well, he was and he was, at the very beginning of (?) if it hadn't been for all the energy and timing he had put into it, I mean from the very beginning before he ... we'd never have (small pause)

S: What about the age of people coming along, do we see any changes there? Age?

Vangisa: Well, since the very beginning yes, the average age(s) were certainly higher. I think it starts going down comparatively early.

S: Sanghamitta and Sadhumati, they 'shoved' it up a bit, and of course (?)

Vangisa: But for the first lot were all between the early thirties, and the early forties, middle-aged middle-class...

S: Well not all were quite middle-class, but more or less.

Vangisa: (Several over forty)

Siddhiratna: Do you think that's significant in terms of a mass movement? I mean eight years later we are not even a hundred Order members, whereas if you've got a more popular spiritual movement, you'd probably have some thousand(s) by now...

S: But it wouldn't be a spiritual movement,

___: (Inaudible)

___: It would probably all be over by now. (Laughter.)

S: (Laughter.) It would have been over long ago.' [199] I would be back in India, building myself a big temple with the proceeds!

___: And we'd have been with guru Maharaji.

S: No, he has gone! It would have to be somebody else, the next Messiah! But that is another point. We have seen various moments rise and decline, haven't we? They may be not fade away altogether but we have certainly seen them at their zenith of their popularity when their followers were sort of pouring in in their dozens, such as in Sakura or even here, and now, where are they? We saw Maharishi's movement rise and fall like that, though he still has many followers, but they certainly don't have that publicity that they used to. And there was Hare Krishna.

___: (Several voices inaudible.) (on a different kind of level; very low key?)

S: Well they emphasize the fact that there is no change in your way of life. You don't have to change anything or give up anything. On that basis you can have quite a wide spread interest. The Hare Krishna people were quite prominent at one time, weren't they? We saw them everywhere in London. But the Guru Maharaji had a bigger band than any of the others probably, but then where is guru Maharaji now? Well he is in Miami actually, so somebody told me. But what has happened to his movement? It's virtually collapsed.

___: What is he doing in Miami?

S: Well it's a place where good Americans go. He is American now, the golden sands and all that. I think we can say that we haven't had any sort of real ups and downs, we've just more or less steadily grown, steadily expanded, even though we are still very small. But I think compared with many movements our level is quite high.

___: (Inaudible.)

S: And what is involved, what is demanded. Well it's extraordinary we have got nearly a hundred people. I certainly didn't manage to do it in India. I don't think it would have been possible; certainly couldn't do it among the ex-untouchables, that's far too much of a popular movement. I didn't get one person in fact from (?). I tried very hard and was in contact with many people. Well I was in contact with hundreds - if not thousands - of people personally. But I didn't get anyone actually to become committed, in the sense of the average order member here for instance.

Vangisa: I remember at what I think was probably the first meeting we had at what later became the Council of the FWBO, you already outlined your own plans for the Order. You had been working on this presumably (?) for some time, but did you intend to start it here or does that not matter?

S: No, I wanted to start it here. I had even the idea of it at Hampstead, but I made some sort of, took some steps in that direction. But obviously it couldn't get very far and I was quite glad really eventually when I had the opportunity of starting up entirely on my own - that was very welcome really (laughs) though some of my friends with the best of intentions were trying very hard to get me back were I was before! I was hoping they would not succeed, [200] though I couldn't actually say anything, but actually of course they didn't succeed.

Vangisa: That's another thing that Order meeting even after the outlined ideas and all that in the Order, particularly, people were still working at re-creating the original situation, which was very much a secondary thing.

S: Well, I was dreading that they might be successful. (Laughter.) Nine years is not really a very long time, but quite a lot has happened.

___: As far as growth and the Movement is concerned an awful lot has really happened in the last three years.

S: Yes, yes indeed, since I've left London

___: (And) most of the growth in fact is over three years and not nine.

S: Right, that is very true. The rate of growth has more than doubled, may be trebled.

___: Well three years ago there was Akshobhya in New Zealand. There was 'Archway', just 'Archway', and there was no Glasgow, no Brighton.

S: There was Aryatara.

___: But that wasn't a centre in those days.

S: There was a community.

___: Yes.

___: A rather languid community

S: Well, (it's) consolidating. (Laughter.) It is quite interesting because people who come along now are really very very lucky. There is a fully fledged Order virtually, right in front of them - visible and functioning. And there are almost dozens of people with whom they can have contact and whom they can ask questions. People of all sorts, some younger and older, some male some female, some very working class some comparatively middle-class background, some very literate some not so literate.

Vangisa: There was not anything like this around when I was in my early twenties. It's fantastic. I just can't (believe it). Looking back now, it seems incredible. Imagine having something like this.

S: Well, think of me at the age of eighteen going to the Buddhist Society in Great Russell Street, when the Buddhist Society was Mr Humphreys, Mrs Humphreys, Claire Cameron and about ten or twelve other people, meeting once a week in a little room in Great Russell Street. That's all we had.

Siddhiratna: You actually knew, you actually went along to Christmas Humphreys, had contact with Christmas Humphreys before you went into the army and went to India?

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S: Yes. I was actually in the Army, I'd just joined - I joined or rather was called up, conscripted at the age of eighteen and it was a few months after that that I went along to the Buddhist Society. I was a subscriber to the Middle Way for about two years from about the time I was about sixteen-seventeen, and therefore I knew there was a society but I didn't manage to pluck up courage to actually go along and contact, until I was eighteen, and by that time I was in the Army. And then I met Christmas Humphreys and various other people, and that was in 1944. Yes, it must have been the year I went out to India. I was about eighteen and a half then. That's all there was. And I remember going along to a Wesak meeting at that time. And when I came back twenty years later, they were having exactly the same kind of Wesak meeting. They hadn't changed at all!

___: Talking of Wesak meetings, there was four or five years ago a Wesak meeting in a hall in Victoria, which was, it wasn't the very first thing I came to (it was the) second. It was the thing that grabbed me.

S: That's when we had the walking and chanting.

___: Yes. It was an amazing evening.

S: Some of our friends took me to task about that because they said it was putting off all the newcomers, all that walking round and chanting was really sort of turning people off.

___: It's strange because I am looking at myself objectively or whatever, I would have thought that I would have been exactly the kind of person it would have put off. In fact that's what got me!

S: Well lots of people did come that I never saw again, I must say that too.

___: Where did they all come from?

S: I don't know, there was a very large number of new people, and we advertised it quite well, and a lot of young people came. And then Terry Dukes came along there for the first time with Carol.

___: No he didn't that was Dharmachakra Day - couple of other places.

S: Was it?

___: But he was there.

S: We used the hall twice then, did we that Napier Hall?

___: Manchester?

S: Well partly it was having all that space. It was a quite good big hall. I had to cut my talk short, do you remember?

___: You talked about the Puja.

S: Yes. The only thing I sometimes think is that it's very good that there is this greater intensity and depth of commitment within the [202] Order and so on, and a very good staunch body of mitras and friends as it were surrounding the Order. I think we have to be very careful we don't get out of contact with the general public. I've a feeling we were more in contact with the general public a few years ago, mainly through our beginners retreats and things like that.

Mangala: What's happened now is the percentage, we've got an alternative society and we are (?) self-contained and you could spend your life just talking to Friends and Order members.

S: In a way we have (an alternative society). I do that virtually (spend my life virtually just talking to Friends and Order members) whenever I come in contact with the world outside, it's a bit of a shock. I am virtually all the time functioning within the Friends, which is extremely pleasant, but one mustn't forget that that isn't the world.

Vangisa: (Inaudible.) We are in fact - it struck me at the time that we are in fact coming to another turning point; well no, I wouldn't like to say that who you keep out is as important as who you let in but this factor (inaudible?) ...

S: Well we are tightening up generally.

Vangisa: Yes. Five years ago we had a 150 people or 100 people or 50 people coming along to things (?) come to a head; and it was a good thing to have that number of people, and out of those a few would stay. This situation doesn't exist any longer. We feel we can pick and choose.

S: Ah, but in order to be able to pick and choose, you must have people to pick and choose from. I feel that perhaps we haven't enough people to pick and choose from. So we are not perhaps paying enough attention to contacting entirely new people.

Vangisa: Would this happen with Sukhavati?

S: It likely will, yes. Also there is the fact that our efforts - very much into Sukhavati and everything connected with Sukhavati.

___: Do you mean entirely new people in a sense of just people that you haven't met before, or do you mean entirely different kinds of people in terms of social class etc.?

S: Well, both actually. I mean, for instance, I remember that we used to have retreats at Keffolds and Quartermain, and we advertised these, and people would come along who had had no previous contact with us, completely new people. For instance, Abhaya and Val Kennedy came along in that way. They came to our second retreat. And also, another thing is we don't have many public lectures, well, that's mainly my fault, I am not giving any, but a lot of people come for lectures. The lectures are quite attractive to the general public because they don't commit you to anything. They give you a chance just to come and listen and to sample. Whereas even to go to a meditation class commits you to a slight extent at least: you are doing something; you are actually participating, but that does not apply to a lecture. I felt a bit like that at Brighton at the reception. We got along quite a few people I am sure who never would come along to a meditation class to begin with. There were quite a few people [203] just from the general public, who had had no previous contact with the Friends, or perhaps even with Buddhism.

Asvajit: I think it would be very good if we had public lectures in Brighton.

S: Yes. So I was even thinking that. I mean I was thinking that may be I, myself, could give one or two or three, yes. But, it may be partly because of that that the main person to give lectures was me and I just stopped completely, or virtually completely, for three years. So that may be one of the reasons why we are not pulling in so many people from the general public.

Vangisa: On the other hand, effectively we are in existence, we are a fact of life, increasingly people can become aware of our existence. So it's much easier for us to attract a small number of people who would have been left over (previously?). Those people can increasingly anyway, become aware of us.

S: Quite a few people have heard of us, just a very rough idea of what we are like - that we are either not their cup of tea, or might be their cup of tea.

___: You say you've been interviewed for 'Resurgence'?

S: Yes, not very satisfactorily, by a very inexperienced young chap who had no idea of how to conduct an interview; he just sort of rambled on for a couple of hours. I don't know what he's going to make of the tape recording he took. A lot of hard work - a bit of a waste of time, in a way. I don't know whether you will be able to read the interview.

Mangala:(?) Do you know which issue it will be in?

S: Well, it might not be the next one, an issue has just come out; they are published every two months. He said he wasn't sure if it will be the next one. It wasn't very satisfactory. It's all right just as a contact with him; he seemed quite a decent young chap. But as an interview or

material out of which to make an interview... Maybe someone a bit skilled like Padmaraja or like you or like (?) could edit it down to about one page of worthwhile material.

___: Though with you in particular, I think with a lot of us, we often underestimate, even what may seem like trivial or fairly down-to-earth chat is much more (?) one's (?)

S: Well, we were talking about serious things, but it seem to be very rambling and very inconsequential, and fragmented. He didn't know how to ask leading questions that would draw me out a bit. He had no idea of how to do that.

___: Perhaps you should have suggested some!

S: It wasn't sharp or pointed or anything of that sort, but it would need to be very thoroughly edited. (Pause.) He did ask me one or two questions but they were very vague and woolly sort of questions. 'What do you think is the most important question in the world today?'

___: You tell me that (Laughter.)

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S: ... floundering, trying to find something important (?) grabbed hold of something about individuality, the way in which the individual as such was more and more crushed out of existence. Emphasize the need to develop individuality - and then by luck and judgement I got on to this question of what really makes a man, but I borrowed large chunks from Chintamani's article as it were, (laughs), and from there I got on to Buddhahood and Enlightenment, and then from there I made a jump to our own alternative society, and then to Sukhavati! (Laughter.)

___: Pretty general!

S: And then, he sort of hummed and ah'd, and he said, I don't really quite know how to ask this or whether to bring it up at all, or even include it in the interview, he said but 'what is the attitude of the Friends towards women?' he said 'this is a men's community, isn't it?' So I said 'yes', and he said 'one of the members just come and see (me) and explained that he and many others found it better, from the point of view of their meditation, not to have that sort of stimulation around when you are trying to meditate, but what do you think of women? I said well that's a very big question etc., etc. Well that was the only question he really asked. It was about two hours practically. (Pause.)

But I think Sukhavati itself will make a big difference to the Order and the Movement, once that is really functioning.

___: You can see the germs in what's already happening now (at other centres?)

S: But I think also what is very interesting, the way in which centres elsewhere have become interested, or even had visits. I think that's very good, that's having quite an effect I am sure, quite apart from the actual pressure of the fund-raising and so on.

___: It all seems to go together in fact.

S: Anybody else, I mean among the older order members seen any changes or developments of the last few years, anything significant?

___: Who is next? Who is next?

___: Asvajit.

S: Asvajit.

Asvajit: The first order member I met was Devendra at Sakura and I think things have changed a great deal since then. I saw a few isolated order members. I remember Ananda running round with Michael (?) and Kay (?) (?) me in a hurry; Gotami going round saying 'be yourself' (laughter) and Vangisa. It was only later that I twigged that there was in fact an Order, and that they were working together. (Well) they were individuals (?)

S: I think the relative newcomer now, doesn't get that impression of - doesn't sort of wonder 'where is the Order' kind of thing; it's self-evident, there is an Order. I think it's pretty evident that there is such a thing.

Vangisa: Of course, there wasn't at that particular time.

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S: There was not many people.

Vangisa: And there weren't but there was an Order at that time. It was different at that time than it would have been a year or two earlier, there still wasn't an Order in the real sense of the word.

S: Well perhaps you really do need a certain number of people for there to be an Order, as well as a definite level of commitment.

Asvajit: I began to feel that there was definitely an Order at the time of Buddhadasa, Padmaraja, Vajradaka, and Nagabodhi who were ordained.

S: That is, yes, about the time when things really did change, in 71-72. Yes we seemed at that time to draw in a whole team of particularly capable people or alive people.

Asvajit: I think perhaps from that time onwards there was a much greater sense of commitment to the ideal, and a much greater openness and sense of freedom and happiness in the Movement.

S: When one considers that when we got this place, Archway, Pundarika, it was found by Buddhadasa and obviously the question of getting it ready arose. Buddhadasa took the lead and did a great deal of the work. But he found it very difficult to get anybody to help him, do you remember that? He was reminiscing about it in a letter recently, that the only person who helped him steadily and quite a lot was Eveleen, he just couldn't get help and co-operation much even from other order members. But now look at Sukhavati and the amount of help that can be mustered. And that's only what four years, or even less...

___: Four years.

Siddhiratna: Sorry I didn't catch Asvajit's list of people who were around at the time of Buddhadasa's finding of the place?

S: Vajradaka, Padmaraja, Devaraja - they were all ordained at about that time, 71-72.

: And that was when Subhuti was mitra'd?

S: I think he came a bit later.

: None of those people were the kind that you'd find at Sukhavati. In a sense Buddhadasa was 'one on his own'.

S: Yes he was certainly one of the more practical ones.

Asvajit: Yes, then there was a further much stronger boost in the Subhuti, Lokamitra, Mangala, Hridaya, Manjuvajra, Chintamani lot.

: You weren't, were you? a bit later.

: I came (the year) after.

Lokamitra: I remember the summer I organized a retreat in Cambridge before I'd thought of, at all, of ordination or anything like that, and I didn't mind organizing the retreat, but the only two order [206] members I had, I saw a lot, were Buddhadasa and who were running things administratively here. And I thought, 'Oh I don't want to become an order member... if that's what you do, when you become an order member! (Laughter.)

S: Well what were your ideas of the ideal order member?

Lokamitra: I hadn't thought in terms of ordination at all, although it was only about six months or seven months before I was ordained, but I suddenly changed, wanted to do anything I could.

S: Yes, right.

Lokamitra: I think perhaps because I was teaching, had a full-time job and I saw it too much in terms of continuation.

S: Yes.

Asvajit?: It seems to be two definite types of order member. One type which works administratively in a very obvious way, and another type which just gets on with it and does it without any apparent organization. The two are really different because to have an organization you have to have some sort of system in order to operate at all.

S: Even if it is merely in your own mind.

S: Megha was very good in this sort of way, wasn't she? She ran the Christchurch Centre, but you hardly saw any vestige of an organization. It's only recently they've been sending minutes of council meetings, even having council meetings.

___: (I think) Indrajala stop organizing things.

S: Older order members are reminiscing about changes they've seen in the Order over the last few years; Vangisa started and then Asvajit.

Asvajit: There seems to be a pattern of action-reaction against, or between organization and no-organization, which (isn't?) a very deliberate attempt to direct the Movement and then - or it's too much, when we are not being spontaneous, we are not being open enough, we are not being free enough.

: That doesn't seem to be such a problem, at least here, like it was a year ago. It seems to be greatly reduced.

S: Well that's another thing, in the very early days of the Movement, I don't know to what extent Vangisa remembers this, but it was very difficult to get anybody to do anything. Do you remember this? You are an order member, what do you think of (this)?

Vangisa: Order members at that time did not regard themselves as being - there was a big thing about really just being the same as everyone else, this was some sort of block but as soon as there was any suggestion of an OM not being any different to anybody else mind, then (it was something) we should be ... very often.

S: I remember that. Yes, several order members made this point, we are just the same as everybody else, not different [207] at all. Yes. Then if you pursued it further, said well look you are supposed to be committed, that's what makes an order member, they would then say 'well everybody is committed in their own way'. We had rather a lot of this. It was several years.

___: Is that not true - you get the order member who goes say from country to country, the order member who hangs out (near) the country...

S: Oh no, they weren't talking about order members but anybody who came along!

___: Oh.

S: Yes, yes, that was the (thing). Don't forget there were very few order members in those days; many who were coming along or looking in, coming along or looking in once or may be not coming along at all, the answer was that everybody was committed...

Vangisa: And then of course there was no opportunity, or hadn't yet become much of an opportunity for anybody to do anything, in terms of their own initiative, even... bang a gong.

S: Or even wash up after... This is not all that many years ago. I remember very well Khema at Centre House after a lecture. It must have been one of those beautiful lectures on the Bodhisattva ideal and the dana paramita, and all the rest of it. And afterwards Khema came

up, called out 'would anyone like to help with the washing up?' and not a single person stirred. And she went downstairs, and I think Druva(?) helped her do it. Not a single person stirred, and it was quite characteristic then.

Vangisa: On the other hand if you had, if anybody had, if it were possible, kind of stuck his head out and taken more on himself, that would have expressed a greater commitment, it would have been I think, prevented, because I think it would have been regarded as presumptuous.

S: Yes, presumptuous, but there was very much this consumer mentality within the whole Movement and even within the Order, that they were just there to be fed, not to contribute anything, not to give anything, not to do anything.

Vangisa: But this was obviously inevitable because at the very beginning certainly my idea was, you were the teacher and I wanted to learn something, I just didn't give a damn really about whatever else (I suppose there wasn't too much else involved rather just a few of us) who could absorb the teaching. (I think everybody is like that to some extent anyway, because the people who were more active and wanted to organize something were doing their own thing in that way, because they felt (they were in fact) doing something instead of listening. There was a very large amount of this consumer attitude, so it was obviously going to take a lot of time, before a few people - it had to be a communal thing - to start to develop out of it. Giving out in an inevitable part of the injecting process.

S: Right, yes. And teaching is a part of learning.

Vangisa: And teaching is a part of learning, yes.

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S: But it seems to me that this sort of consumer mentality within the Movement was very much the manifestation within the Movement of an attitude which is so general in society. People want to be amused, they want it all done for them; everything provided, laid on. And they clearly thought that you were there to do that. And for quite a while, quite a few years, most of the people who came along thought that there was some big Trust or foundation in the background which was financing everything. And they didn't have any responsibility towards keeping it going. This was a quite general feeling in the early days, for some years. And that they were entitled to whatever was being provided.

___: And then you had Sudatta (?) (Laughter.)

S: And perhaps even quite liking the idea. But there is a very big change in that respect. I mean even mitras work quite hard; many mitras work much harder than order members did in those days.

___: (Inaudible.)

S: It seems incredible, doesn't it?

Vangisa: I remember Mike Griffiths making some remark, rather suspiciously one time 'You know I think' he said to you 'it's your idea that some time to come we will be spending all our

time at this!' (Laughter.)

S: I don't remember that but it seems very much in keeping.

S: Those Sunday seminars.

Vangisa: For some reason we were down in the kitchen at the time. And it had just begun to look as though the penny had just dropped!

S: Well in those days if I'd spoke about right livelihood and so on, I'd very tentatively mentioned that some people might like to get part-time jobs and devote part of their time to Buddhist activities. This was quite daring in those days. Then there was the well-known case of when I was at Hampstead. I just tentatively mentioned it in a lecture on the Eightfold Path, I think it was, and an old gentleman called Bill Reville who used to tape-record the talks, after I had given this lecture, he said to me afterwards 'Bhante, that's the worst lecture you've ever given.' And I asked him 'Why, what's wrong Bill?' He said 'you are undermining the foundations of the whole of British economy.' (Laughter.) There was just this timid reference to the possibility of some people giving up their full-time jobs and taking part-time jobs. This was very revolutionary in those days. English Buddhists didn't think in those terms ever before. You just went along once a week to the class, that was what your Buddhism was.

Vangisa: I remember a few years ago saying something to Jack Osborne (inaudible?) about the idea of solitary retreats (?) time for going off by ourselves, and he was horrified. 'What employer 'he said' would put up with that?'

S: I can just imagine Jack saying 'Solitary retreats! Who would you talk to?' (Laughter.) Even this idea of solitary retreat is comparatively recent. I hadn't mentioned it in the early days at all, had I? I don't think I mentioned it for what, five years. (Pause.)

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And Vegetarianism was something quite exceptional in the early days, not so much the Friends, but certainly when I was at Hampstead and going to the Buddhist Society, vegetarianism even was something a bit exceptional; the majority of Buddhist were not vegetarian.

Vangisa: (Inaudible?)

___: In the lecture on ordination which you gave just before the first ordination you were saying if one is thinking of making this commitment, one would hope that there is at least a movement in the direction of vegetarianism, say one meat-free day a week, or a month.

S: (laughs) Yes that is how one has to insert very cautiously the thin end of the wedge. Then of course you had Christmas Humphreys saying that to meditate for more than a minute at a time was dangerous. (Laughter.) He actually did! Then there was his classic retort, if people asked him if he meditated, he said 'yes, while I am waiting for the traffic lights to change!' That is what he always used to say.

Vangisa: On that subject of people, husband and wife (?) were quite alarmed one evening because they had seen on television Jack (?) and sometimes (?) talking about Buddhism and

he was demonstrating robes, and incense and they were very taken aback, and then they were really (?) rather shaken by it. I don't know what it was like, I noticed it was on, but I didn't see it because it was about midnight and (?).

S: It sounded more like something for Marie to watch than you, with these changes of robes and things (perhaps) hats too! But of course another sort of thought is that in another nine years you might be looking back on these days in much the same way.

Vangisa: Oh, I am quite sure of that.

S: Or even more so.

___: Quite sure Bhante.

___: Something I wonder is that you've held things back; you had 'kid-gloves' of a sort.

S: Well, you can say if you like the, what do they call it, the iron fist within the velvet glove! (laughs.)

Lokamitra: Yeah, I mean you are clear from what you said about so forth ... you've obviously opened up more and more, what else have you come up with, you tell us - for the next nine years! (Laughter.)

S: For the next nine years? For instance there were one or two things that I did not have in mind and did not foresee, I must make that clear also, that a few things developed quite spontaneously. One for instance was, probably the most prominent example, the single sex retreats and the single-sex communities. This is something I had not thought of, but I had in fact assumed at the beginning, that this being the West everything would be on a mixed basis, but I didn't recognize the extent to which, in this country, everything to do with sex had become bound up with very neurotic feeling.

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I think I had not appreciated that.

Vangisa: But you did suggest...

S: I didn't, no. Not that I remember, did I?

Vangisa: (There was an order meeting?)

S: When was that.

Vangisa: 1972.

S: Ah, well no, that is much later, yes, but certainly not at the beginning. I only thought of it seriously after that Summer retreat at Keffolds when I had to sort of pull against practically everybody else on the retreat and get things on to the right path. It was quite clear what that distracting factor was; it was very, very clear - stood out miles, not to say ten miles. And also as I saw in the case of a few individuals in their own personal lives what was happening. But

this was something I didn't anticipate, but is quite clear now, that well in a sense we go back to the traditional pattern that just seems to be the best. You really do need the separate communities, separate retreats, separate practically every thing. But with upasakas and upasikas say cooperating in things like the running of centres. I certainly don't at present see or foresee single-sex centres I think, in as much as centres are for the public - that would not be possible or even desirable. But certainly single-sex communities and retreats and study groups and so on. May be some mixed communities. But I don't think we have yet had a successful mixed community, which is quite a point to bear in mind. But we have had, or do have, successful single-sex communities.

Lokamitra: Thinking about this area and Sukhavati, I can see that a lot of people if not most of the men around here have been much better off in a completely single-sex situation with less contact with women, and so on.

S: In a sense, the average man doesn't need any contact with women except sexual contact. The rest is, as it were, usually quite irrelevant.

Siddhiratna: I don't think that's true.

S: No? In what way?

Siddhiratna: Well I find it, say, working with Ann Murphy is very good working as an individual, regardless of whether she is man or woman, I get on with her as a workmate.

S: I think this very rarely happens.

Siddhiratna: I think it may be rare but I think it's too categorical a statement to say that men don't need women at all in a sense. I think as individuals they can be just as useful as men can.

S: But what I meant was what you get from the woman in that situation you could also get from another man.

___: Yes.

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S: But what you get from the woman in the sexual context is not usually what you can get from another man. So usually you go to the woman for that; because that's the only place you can get it as it were.

___: Yes, but IT got the feeling...

S: Everything is as it were available elsewhere without that distracting factor.

___: What would everything else be?

S: Well there is the companionship and so on.

Siddhiratna: It seems to be denying, and I don't want [to] actually stand up for women as it

were, I am sure women if they want to can stand up for themselves, but to say that you don't need women at all seems to be knocking them too far out of the way.

S: No, I think that is correct. I think you don't - in a sense that there is nothing that you can get from a woman, apart from sex itself, that you can't get from a man, in that sense. Not that some of the things you get from men you can't get from women too, well, sure you can. But for most men, the sexual factor is complicating. So that if you definitely want sex, all right, have the connection with women, have the contact with them. But, when you want to get on with other things, and you don't want to be bothered with sex, it's better to get on with it with men.

___: With men only.

___: Would that also apply for women - conversely?

S: I don't think it quite applies, I mean this is where it becomes a little bit more difficult, because it seems as though women's sexuality is rather different from that of men. Going by all the text books anyway, men are just more easily and quickly aroused and stimulated than women are.

___: And may be satisfied as well

S: And may be satisfied, whereas with women it's a much more long term process. So, for a woman just to have casual contact with men socially is not necessarily sexually stimulating in the way the corresponding contact with women is for men. So they don't so much perhaps have that problem, not in specifically sexual terms.

___: Isn't this exactly where the problem lies, because the man can't get that extra factor that he needs from a woman, because the woman doesn't respond in the way that the man wants to?

S: Well, some women do. But I think they are in the minority and they are usually the minority that is, as it were, in circulation. This is what one usually finds. (Pause.) I am sure that in the case of women too, they get a lot of the support that they are accustomed to getting from men, with all the complications that go with that, they can get from other women.

S: But they tend not to look to other women, certainly not in our society, in that sort of way, but actually they can get that sort [212] of support, that sort of companionship, from other women, quite easily. And I think some of them are beginning to discover that.

Mangala: What about homosexual relationships and things like that.

S: Well, I think to the extent that they reproduce the neurotic factors of the heterosexual relationships that exactly the same criticism applies.

Mangala: But I mean, in that case then you would say that, by implication, a man should go and live with women so as not to be...

S: Well yes, if he is not stimulated by women, yes well, go and live with women by all

means, if they'll have you! (Laughter.) Or if they won't well you will just have to go and lead a hermit's life, go into permanent solitary retreat.

Lokamitra: It seems to me, in a way sex doesn't come into it that much. You want to communicate with people as openly as possible, get on without any distractions coming in.

S: I think also, if you are able to do that, the sexual imperative becomes much less. I don't think you can sort of, concentrate on the sexual thing itself and solve it as a detached problem. But if you have a satisfactory communication with other people, which means usually if you are in a single-sex community with the other members of that community, and a good warm friendly relationship, sex just becomes relatively much less important, and especially if you are into something creative at the same time. I mean if the possibility of it is there, right on your doorstep as it were, then you'll start sort of thinking and wandering. Well, if it isn't you probably won't think about it at all, or nearly so much.

___: You hear or read of the idea that a man can form a useful relationship with women in that he can see in her his own femininity, and vice-versa, a woman can relate to her own masculinity through contact with a man. Do you think (a) it's true, (b) it's healthy or (c) it's worth...

S: I think it's complete rubbish. I am more convinced about that, more than ever, after coming and staying at Sukhavati. Now one would have thought since it's a lot of men living together, doing quite hard work, and even rough work, it would be a rather crude and a coarse masculine atmosphere, with lots of masculine jocularities and all that sort of thing. But not in the least, not the least trace of that, it's much more refined, gentle. In other words, it's as though the so-called feminine side, which seems to have very little to do with women, is completely out in the open. And I must say I was quite surprised in a way, though I did accept the usual view in the matter, but even so I was surprised how gentle and how refined everything was, genuine friendliness. So it's almost as though far from needing contact with women to get in contact with your own femininity, you need contact more with other men.

Mangala: On the other hand (?) experience probably like someone in the army or like a building site ... experience. A group of guys together like that would be really [213] very coarse, and, dirty jokes ...

S: Well, there are two things here, I am speaking within the context of the Friends, not in the context of society in general. I've also been in the Army; I've been in the army for three years, so I can compare the two. It's certainly true that there is quite a bit of crudity and so on in the Army sort of situation. I think the difference here is, there are three things. First of all there is the common objective, ultimately. You share the same sort of ideal. You are also meditating together every day or nearly every day. They are not all that strict about it and they don't force people to get up early and meditate if they don't want to; but usually most people do join in most days. And also the third factor is that it is all in together. But there are these other two factors as well. So, certainly one can say that, within the context of the Friends, and probably outside too, one doesn't need contact with women to develop that so-called feminine side of oneself, if anything just the opposite. Contact with women prevents you contacting it within yourself. It looks like that.

Asvajit: I find increasingly recently that I experience metta as a very direct perceptible force

almost in myself when I am communicating with other men. I don't find it very much with women if at all. I wonder why that should be? Whether it is perhaps that women rely on the men for their energy in some peculiar way, (in which) they can draw energy from the man. They look to him for every microscopic move, every little hint for their own motivation. It's as if they're blocks of ice and the man unfreezes them whereas with another man, that isn't so he responds, he amplifies, encourages. It seems a bit like that sometimes.

Mangala: It seems to be also that whatever the problem - may be specifically sexual problem - and it just somehow seems to be, not so much solved, as transcended through the Friends. They just cease to exist somehow.

S: I must say despite, I mean, my own anticipations of things, I must say that staying at Sukhavati for a few weeks has been quite an eye-opener. And though I would have anticipated it to be a positive situation for people there, I had no idea how positive in fact it would be, and actually is now. It has been quite an eye opener. And it is these three things. First of all there is the common objective and common ideals, but also a certain amount of common practice, and it is a single-sex community. So these three things together seem to have produced quite extraordinary results. But, this is something not foreseen from the beginning, that we would have single-sex communities and activities and so on, because it's almost been forced upon us by circumstance almost in desperation.

Vangisa: (Almost inaudible) This whole proliferation of communities ... we happen to be in Archway... short-lived communities...

S: That too, yes.

: (Inaudible)

S: Which one was that?

Lokamitra: (Chepmont) Road (and then) 1, Bertram Street ...

S: Where Chintamani was with Vajradaka, Khema, Manjuvajra?

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: But there were other people in the area all squatting, there would be. There was ... (inaudible)

Siddhiratna: Gerry, there was Harry the Pig.

: But not Friends

Siddhiratna: No, not Friends but I mean what you are saying, what you seem to be saying is the area was there and it was months after people started squatting...

Vangisa: The growth of the movement... (Inaudible) a certain amount of accommodation strayed around where we happened quite accidentally to have found a Centre. In another part of London the development might (inaudible...?)

S: Yes, because when we had Sakura, when we were having meetings at Centre House, there was no question of anybody settling in the locality. This is again something that happened quite spontaneously.

Vangisa: And we were obviously looking for somewhere central. The idea then was place in central London, everybody could come from all outlying areas...

S: Yes, actually we were thinking in those sort of terms.

Vangisa: (This is) rather far out.

S: Some people were very much against that, having a centre at Archway. There was quite a bit of opposition to it.

Siddhiratna: Because it wasn't in the centre of London...

: Too far away.

S: Yes. And it was even thought that a lot of people would stop coming. A few might have done, but I think not really very many.

: It's one of those extraordinary strokes of luck.

S: Yes, right.

Siddhiratna: I wonder how much it also influenced the kind of people, we were talking earlier about the different kinds of people that come along, and how much it influenced...

S: Oh, I think it's influenced quite a bit.

Siddhiratna: Because there is not many people that would (may) be come along to a Buddhist organization and still get into squats at the same time. It's a radical departure from their 'normal' lifestyle.

S: Yes. Where you tended to have these sort of 'homeless wanderers' more, temporarily settled in squats. Squats are the sort of trees and caves and so on.

: Clothing from jumble sales.

Siddhiratna: I think the positive aspect, one of the interesting aspects is I think you got the sort of hippie mentality and what that's transformed into in the sense of becoming activists in some ways and squatting being an obvious way. That having a [215] centre here is very much (conditioned) as part of North London, if you compare it to other squatted areas such as Camden and places like that there is a very good feeling around this place and I think it largely depends on the fact that there is a meditation centre with people living in the area.

S: Yes. Well it would be very good if in different areas, we could as it were, colonise them, in a sense of having a permanent centre not a centre like this, but a permanent centre with permanent communities all around, and in fact gradually predominating in the whole area.

___: It works at grass roots level.

S: Right, even though may be the personnel in the communities would change or you know, go away, but you have actual communities there all the time.

___: I was thinking - perhaps having our own housing association within that...

S: I think we need to have something like that.

___: Especially if we move out, well as we are moving out to West London or perhaps eventually to South London, Brixton area, areas like that, where as far as I understand organizations like student community housing and self help groups, they don't function to the extent in those areas as they do in these areas here round Archway. To think - if it could be organized, and I don't know how much organization will be involved, if we could have our own Housing Association, we could certainly benefit.

S: But, so we should. I mean this has been talked about for several years. But, anyway, the point for all this is mainly, this was another spontaneous development involving Order members and friends and also enabling some Order members to be free for activities and so on, which otherwise they may not have been if they had to have a full-time job, or, at least a part-time job to pay for their accommodation but since they were squatting they were able to live on very much less therefore to work less, therefore to do more for the Movement. And that has resounded to the benefit of the whole Movement. So that was something we didn't work out from the beginning.

___: (Spent) a lot of time in meditation as well.

S: But, anyway someone did ask about development for the next nine years, we didn't get on to that yet. I am just wondering, it's very difficult to say ... more and more of a, well, I won't say less and less...!

___: Once a year you ought to be allowed to say something utterly outrageous!

S: Only once a year! (Laughter.) (?) Sometimes the Movement has its own momentum, say for instance in the question of the single-sex communities, it seems to have gathered its own momentum and people have been talking about, well they've already formed single-sex mitra study-groups, and some of you are even talking, I understand, of pushing this development to even further extremes as it were. I don't myself know where it's going to end. It seems to be gathering its own momentum.

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Vangisa: (?) is the number of women order members (grown?) (if it is not?) getting proportionate to the number of men is itself going to cause changes, might even cause problems which will have to be solved.

S: I don't really see how it could actually.

Vangisa: Well, if you are going to have a tradition of single-sex community, there will be different approaches. For instance, if you are going to have a women's study group for mitras,

and presumably order members would also be women. A certain kind of development would take place. It will be different to the development taking place in a male study group.

S: I think that's an open question, because all the women who become ordained, who commit themselves in that way, in a sense they cease to be women, in a sense. In the sense that they have to some extent risen above their female conditioning, and won't see things just as women but more as individuals. And so inasmuch as the men, the upasakas follow a similar sort of pattern that they also rise above their conditioning if any, as men, and become more individuals there will be more and more of a common outlook, inasmuch as both are more individual. But there may be some difference in dealing with women friends and mitras and those who are just coming along; in a sense the women may need a somewhat different approach. But I don't see women order members as such, as having a different approach.

Vangisa: Is this because nowadays (women?) are conscious of a strong identity as women, that (pause) I would imagine that presumably in women's communities and women's study groups there is (an) approach.

S: Well you see, I've tried to find out, I've asked some of the women, in the sense that I say well is there a different approach? Is there sort of an approach that would be more helpful to you? And they all say 'yes'. But they can't put their finger on what exactly it would be; which is quite odd in a way. Or they say they think there is but they don't know what it would consist in. (Pause.) For instance, sometimes it's said well, women are more devotional - do they need a more devotional approach than men? One might say 'well yes'. But actually in practice you find that the men are no less devotional than the women actually. So it's yet to be ascertained in what that distinctive approach consists. Well one can certainly imagine women discussing questions which are of more interest to them than to men. For instance they've discussed things like abortion, which obviously is more of concern to women than it is to men. Although there is only a few topics of that sort. Otherwise it seems mainly a matter of giving one another moral support so that they are not so dependent emotionally on men. And also there is this question - that if they are to realize their own identities better, which would surely be a good thing, well, what is that identity? One must be very sure that one is, whether one is a woman or whether one is anything else, whether one is really realizing one's true identity or trying to realize some idea about your identity which has been given you.

Vangisa: The idea, the present attitude doesn't actually stem from (ideas) (of what?) identity should be.

Lokamitra?: It seems to me that whenever a group of men demonstrates some kind of strength, then women will, some women will follow that to some extent, yes? Not because they share that ideal, but because [217] they are attracted by the strength. It works the other way I think, that in the Epic of Gilgamesh sex is called the 'art of women' or something, so that some men sort of as it were go the other way and they lose their masculinity - well they lose their identity when they follow the ways of women too much. I am not saying that sex is just the way of women but... So if this happens we get a lot of men - a lot of dynamism, and (then) women come along - we have to be very careful. (Gap in recording.)

S: (gap in recording) the Indians do.

___: that they may need to have them in slightly different ideals even, to aim to.

S: Well this is what I've personally got an open mind about this. I'll try to ascertain from women whether they in fact feel that there is a different ideal and different approach needed, for them. But they are not able to throw any light on it themselves, not as yet anyway. Those within the Movement or even within the Order, they seem quite confused.

Lokamitra?: It seems that women who join the Order have got to be quite confident in a way which isn't normal in most women, or isn't natural to, a lot of women anyway.

S: It seems to me, I know that women's libbers won't agree with this, but it seems 'natural' as it were, for women to 'depend'. Whereas those when they are not able to depend, they are not very happy, not the average woman. Though there are some exceptional women who are more men-like in spirit, and who are more independent therefore.

___: I remember some time ago you were saying it was as though a man had to - the process of unfoldment or development, this was in, for a man with self-discovery, but in a woman it was as though she had to destroy herself and in a sense it was more difficult for them.

S: I wouldn't put [it] in terms of 'destroy'. But I think a woman who is following a spiritual path goes much more against her nature as a woman, than a man in following the spiritual path goes against his nature as a man. In that respect it is more difficult for a woman.

: How is it one goes against one's nature as a man?

S: Well, what is, as it were, the sort of corresponding weakness, that of man? I think it goes against, is most men have got a natural tendency towards competitiveness and self-assertion, which are clearly incompatible with a genuinely spiritual approach. Whereas self-assertion, I mean in a sort of egoistic way, men compete with one another almost automatically without realizing what they are doing. Women actually very rarely compete with one another in that sort of way. It's almost unknown, I think, for them to do that. They might compete a bit for the attention of a certain man. So, they even do that quite indirectly, and not very openly. But men compete if they are together for almost anything - even in talking men are very competitive; women aren't. So that's a sort of mundane masculinity that comes in the way of spiritual development. But I think a woman's mundane femininity as it were comes in the way much more of her development; is much more deeply rooted, much more as it were anti-spiritual.

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: I was talking to you the other week about this, (it) seems to me that there is a lot about a man's mundane conditioning which is actually directly useful to him in the spiritual life.

S: That is true, that is true.

___: For a start the whole idea that a man is going to become something; 'what are you going to be when you grow up?' You have this whole conditioning - laid on you that you are not complete yet, you've got to unfold, realize potential, become something, whereas a woman is already what she is going to become - a woman. And so a woman doesn't have this conditioning to move and grow, except just to grow older. So a man in a way - there is all that conditioning.

Mangala: May be it's an even bigger sort of awakening and challenge for a woman you know, because not only has she got the spiritual growth that men have, but she has also got the conditioning about being a woman and may be raising a family and the whole natural bit about having kids and things as well. So may be she's got even further to go, to grow.

S: Well, actually she has, but that is what makes it more difficult.

___: yes, that's why, at least personally, I feel sympathy towards them, because I feel that they've got it a lot harder than men have.

Vangisa?: The biological disadvantages.

S: Right, this is it, that probably just sums it up, and the associated psychological conditionings. I think one can feel quite rightly, in a way, quite sorry for them and that they probably wouldn't quite like to hear that said. And this is why they, or why it should be considered whether there are any extra facilities or special approaches that might make it a bit easier for them. But as I said, they themselves are not able to throw any light on this so far. The only sort of practical thing they are able to think of is that for instance if there is a mixed retreat there should be creches for women who want to come who've got babies. That's about the only practical suggestion they are able to make - nothing beyond that.

___: Bhante, I've talked to a few women since thinking these things over; in fact the response I've had was quite favourable and almost - and you can't tell how useful it is in the long run to have that kind of insight that, I think once a woman does accept that yes, she does have a more difficult position and more difficult starting point, in a way that's the beginning, but while a woman is still trying to say 'well, no, it's not more difficult for me, I am as good as you', but in her haste to say 'I am having a bad time', actually forgetting she does have extra difficulties, I think if those difficulties can be faced...

S: I also think a lot of confusion is created in the minds of women by this wretched so called Women's Liberation movement. I quite agree with what one woman writer said that really this movement is the enemy of women, because it really confuses the issue. I think if women can sort of accept that they do have these extra difficulties and need a bit of extra help, and also their positive qualities are stressed, even though not necessarily spiritual qualities but positive emotional qualities, this also would be a very good thing. But these [219] qualities are the very ones that 'women libbers' are most anxious to get rid of or deny. For instance, it seems quite clear that the normal healthy woman has a sort of feeling to serve, and a feeling to devote herself and she doesn't feel that as something inferior. It's something that she enjoys doing. So, if say, within the context of the Friends women are encouraged to sort of feel in this way, and encouraged to feel that this is positive and good, and it will lead to their own development and growth. But I think a lot of them just want to devote themselves. They can't commit in the spiritual sense, very often just yet, but they can devote themselves, and be very devoted and get great satisfaction out of that. But the 'women's lib' ideology says 'well that is very degrading and this has been imposed upon you by men and you shouldn't want to devote, and you shouldn't want to serve, certainly not serve men. You should be free and independent. But I think this is totally ignoring the facts of their psychology.

Vangisa: I think it's a very important trend at the moment - because to a few years ago literally up to a few years ago, certainly less than 20 years ago, women were appreciated for a

useful function which they performed by being women, performed a useful function. Now this function is no longer useful, it's even anti-social, and I think has produced, well, a lot of confusion, a lot of bewildered reaction. So in fact the qualities inherent in this function (which) can be utilized in other areas could be turned into strength.

S: I am quite sure that the natural feminine qualities are quite valuable and could be sort of directed in, or turned in a spiritual direction eventually, all these sort of qualities of service and devotion and nurture and so on. But if a woman herself has been taught by the women's libbers for instance, that all these things are wrong and neurotic and sick and imposed upon them by man's selfishness and greed, she is trying very often to extirpate the best part of herself. So she does end up miserable and confused.

: A line taken by a lot of Women's Libbers seems to be a very masculine sort of line.

S: Yes.

: I get the impression, actually (?) that women's lib is in fact a force of conservatism, that, just as men are beginning to question the mess they've got themselves into, and may be start changing the structure of things, the women are sort of climbing on very much with an eye to taking over the status quo.

: It's just on that level it seems.

S: Also there is the general confusion of thought, the general michaditthis in society, as there are about practically everything, including this. This is one of the things I certainly realized more and more in the last few years, how rampant michaditthis of every kind are. How much we are up against. We really must resist as an Order especially, being influenced by current fashions of thought, including all these sort of Women's Lib' ideas.

Of course women should be respected as individuals, of course they should have the same opportunities as men, if not more opportunities, but to try and get them to behave like men, adopt masculine attitudes virtually this is just foolishness.

Vangisa: (When it started?) it seems to boil down to desire to do [220] men's work, for the same length of time all their lives, until they are sixty five and end up in exactly the catastrophic situation that they have pushed men into ...!

Siddhiratna: I think one of the things I've seen going to school in Clapham Common, the Borough of Lambeth employs women to sweep the streets and they are really good.

___: I think they are doing that here in Camden.

___: Do they?

___: They do it really well!

___: With feather dusters! (Laughter.)

Lokamitra: Anyway, looking at Sukhavati you see what could happen and you see the

comparative lack in dynamism among, well, I speak only for men round here at the moment. It's a little bit frustrating in some ways.

S: Well why do you think it is? I mean are you talking about Order members now mainly?

___: Order members and mitras apparently.

S: You find a lack of dynamism here?

Lokamitra: Yes, a comparative one, I mean I think things are better here than they ever have been but ...

S: (Interrupting) Surely it makes a difference when you are living and working and eating and sleeping and meditating, altogether on the same premises. May be if you got all these people together in the same sort of way, there would be the same sort of results at least to some extent. (Pause.) I think there probably would be actually.

Mangala: Yeah, it being very focused there, it's all very direct and obvious.

S: And everyone likes to get back there if they go out, even if they quite enjoy their evening out they like to get back there.

Lokamitra: You can see what a tremendous situation that is. You are not going to have other places soon. I mean I would have thought that would be the tendency, anyone who has got any sense will want to live in a situation like that.

S: Yes. Who doesn't want to have any sense? (Laughter.)

___: I'll keep my own sense.

S: Anyway I still haven't predicted the future, have I? I don't know, I never do that. I think the principles remain the same - we just implement them more and more, and we are just open to possibilities and new opportunities. I don't think we can be very sort of clear cut or schematic, have too much of a blueprint in advance.

___: Ah, I wasn't asking for a prediction, I was wondering if [221] there are any things that you talk about very gently now that in nine years time you will feel free to talk about more strongly and if there is anything you can...

S: Anything at the moment...

___: Anything that you are...

S: Yes, there is this one, I feel that we will realize more and more clearly how totally we are in opposition to our environment and the way in which society at large thinks. I think I myself have really thought this very strongly, only over the last few years. Well I think everybody will see this and feel this more and more.

___: You say 'totally'.

S: Yes, totally, yes, as though we are a completely new beginning for just about everything; it does seem very much like that.

Siddhiratna: Do you mean the sort of things that the environment, pollution, politics, the whole works?

S: Yes, right. I think it's just as well that people don't catch on to this too quickly; they might feel a little threatened or might feel hostile towards us.

___: Well, I mean this has been happening with the men/women situation, has been in a way, a point of friction, where we have broken through a generally accepted norm.

___: A what?

___: A generally accepted norm about men and women, we've been going through it.

Vangisa: Do you know what I thought you said?

___: Huh?

___: I thought you said 'generally accepted Norfolk'!

___: (I said) the generally accepted norm that men and women should mix, are equal in all senses...

S: Norfolk does lead the way we know, but Norfolk, isn't necessarily the norm. (Laughter.)

___: And I suppose that's going to happen' in ways that we can't feel it now because the men-women things just arisen out of events.

S: Yes, right.

___: More things are obviously going to arise. (Pause.)

S: There are quite a lot of things we will have to consider that we haven't or perhaps needed to consider so far. For instance our attitude towards Christianity. I think I have to give sane lectures on this sooner or later; Subhuti suggested this about a year ago.

Asvajit: Do you think that Christianity might begin to play the [222] same part in the development of Buddhism in the West as Bon did in Tibet?

S: I think it's very difficult to compare because that was an ethnic religion with very strong ties with the soil. Christianity isn't quite in that position in England, it is itself a universal religion, even though we encounter it in a sort of ethnic form. I think in that respect may be the comparison should be more with, the pre-Christian indigenous beliefs that we are not very directly in contact with admittedly, but about which we are beginning to learn something. (Pause.) I think also that we have to probably give quite a bit of attention to the question of the family. We know that we are not very much in favour of the nuclear family. We haven't yet experimented with the extended family. It's either that some people have remained with

the nuclear family, though perhaps a bit dissatisfied with it, and others have gone into single-sex communities, but there is no extended family-type community. This has not yet been tried at all, as far as I know; has it?

Lokamitra: Can you outline how it would...

S: I don't know. I mean, a situation in which basically there are both men and women around in the community and there are children being brought up in that community, but it's within a much larger family context than the nuclear family. May be there are ten or twelve people. May be roughly equally adults and children. At least some of the children are the children of at least some of the adults - if you know what I mean. In other words there is some sort of biological connection between some of them. This might possibly develop. Doesn't seem to be a very lively growing point at the moment but it might later on.

___: We nearly started one in Norwich but the house was too expensive. We were going to move Devamitra and my family ...

S: You were adopting him, were you? an honorary uncle!

___: I liked the idea!

S: Yes. I am sure there are quite a few men who like children, who are very fond of children, but they don't particularly want to have any of their own with the total responsibility for them. I was also reading in (I've forgotten now, but anyway) it's some particular community somewhere where the institution of god-parents was very highly developed. And I was thinking it may be something like that would be a desirable development. And it's a very definite relationship and a very definite responsibility - that a child has god-parents who, if necessary take the place of his or her own parents, have got certain definite functions in the child's life, or all through the child's life. And if there are no aunts and uncles around well the god parents are all the more necessary and they play a regular and important part in the child's life in addition to his own parents.

Mangala: We could end up with another sort of mitra system!

S: In a way, yes.

___: I don't know if that would be too got ... (inaudible?) (?)

___: ... disappear you know!

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S: Oh you mean in that sense; no, not like that! Because quite definitely it's not good for children to be emotionally dependant on (on in?) relation with just their own two parents, with very little contact with other adults - this isn't good.

Vangisa: On the other hand, other systems - god-parents - probably depend on (?) community.

S: Yes, this it true. We are probably in a much too expansive and growing phase at present for this to be very possible here. But when say, half the population is Buddhist sort of thing, well

you will have to consider this very seriously. May be this is why it isn't really anything of very great practical concern at present.

Asvajit: Do you find in retrospect the Order or the Movement has expanded faster than you first anticipated?

S: I can't remember that I really thought about it. Did I say anything in the old days? Do you remember? No, I don't think so. I just kept my nose to the grindstone, did what was to be done, took the class for that particular evening and, stuck to what I felt were the principles of the Movement.

Vangisa: One thing of course ... (?) as you say one example, (?) odd words which you used when you did speak, that a lot of people obviously prefer to think in terms of a lay-order.

S: Yes, this is certainly a change that has taken place.

Vangisa: Quite superfluous, meaningless...

S: No, it's really just an order, it's neither monk nor lay. That distinction seems to have dwindled into insignificance.

Vangisa: But there were some people who had cherished that really quite a lot.

S: Well, because they wanted to keep very clear of anything remotely resembling the monastic.

Mangala: Still also useful to - as we were saying yesterday - and you know, certain situations, just to let people know we still are in contact with reality and society at large.

S: Well there were two little girls who came along to Sukhavati: one was about ten, the other about twelve; very forward little girls, that took a great fancy to Subhuti - perhaps their favourite, they call him 'Bootsie'. Well they came along about every week. But that was almost their first question, 'are you allowed to get married?' (Laughter.) So" we said 'yes we can if we want to' So they were quite satisfied. (Laughter.)

Mangala: The sort of problem I keep coming up against is, it's to do with Christianity again, and you start talking about it, and people say well 'isn't Christianity really just as good' and 'isn't Christ's teachings saying the same things really anyway', and really what they are saying is, isn't it possible to do what you are doing but be a Christian?'

S: Depends what you mean by 'being a Christian!' Well, I have said in the past that I felt that I could give a series of talks say, on higher evolution of man, taking all my quotations from Christian sources, admittedly rather selective quotations, and end [224] up with more or less the same result. But this would certainly not be recognized no doubt as Christianity by people who called themselves 'Christians'. But I am pretty certain I could do that.

Vangisa: On the other hand, it would not include a scheme or a practice or a way of behaviour.

S: I think I could manage that.

___: In Christian terms?

S: Not in Christian terms, no. But just using quotes and so on from the Gospels and a few of the mystics. I am quite sure I could produce a series of talks in that sort of way. But it would not be Christianity in the historical sense.

Mangala: You'd say 'Ah well we've got the five precepts, the ten precepts" and they'd say 'that sounds very much like Christianity you know!' 'That's what we are all trying to do, isn't it?

S: It does occur to me, one little prediction I think I can make, I think the Arts will become more and more important. I mean within the Movement, within the Friends. I have been thinking about this quite a bit lately, I think that probably the life of the artist so far as the West is concerned offers a closer analogy to what we are basically trying to do, than the so-called religious life in the West. Do you see what I mean? That if you are trying to put across to people what the Friends is all about, and what the Movement is all about, I think you will be less liable to misunderstanding if you put it across in terms of the artist's life and work than if you put it across in terms of the religious person's life, and the religious person's work. So I think we may have to consider this sort of approach very seriously, or more seriously than we have done so far. Because first of all usually the artist, the genuine artist, is on his own. It's very much an individual thing. You write your poem on your own, you write your novel on your own. It's very rarely that you collaborate or anything of that sort. It's very much your own experience and the great writer, the great artist is someone who is very much in touch with his own experience, and his experience goes beyond that of the ordinary person. But there can be contact between artists, they can help one another with criticism, they can exchange ideas. That is a bit like the spiritual community.

Vangisa: It struck me, this point, it occurred to me recently, I think I mentioned it to someone or other I think we have to draw a distinction between the communal creative activity of the collective (creative) activity and the individual work of art. Now I think within our movement obviously there is no room in the system for both. It seems to me, at the present moment, we may or may not be wrong I don't know, we do seem to be feeling at the moment that it is the collective activity that is all-prevailing? It may be something very big and very important but it's not all. I am speaking now as regards creative art. Just that I can feel there can be a little bit of confusion about it.

Asvajit: There is the other point, the more successful you are in a synthesis of meaning or of understanding of different religious systems, the more the question arises well why choose one rather than the other? So one has to resort to some other method, or some other ...

S: Well sometimes the one that one chooses is, as it were, the least objectionable, the least open to criticism, or that gives one a better [225] vantage point from which to appreciate the others. I mean at least until very recently if you were a Christian you had to absolutely dismiss everything else. But as a Buddhist you are allowed to appreciate whatever is good in other teachings in other traditions. So you can affect a sort of synthesis. Because you can't discard whole great sections of the cultural and spiritual heritage of humanity, you just can't do that. But as a Christian you virtually do have to, if you are an orthodox Christian, you have to believe still, that the people who follow those other teachers are going to hell, 'will not be

saved'. But as a Buddhist you don't have to believe that. As a Buddhist you see everybody working towards some truth, or some realization in their own way, even though you do believe that Buddhism is the straightest and most direct path. You certainly don't believe that the others are lost.

Mangala: I suppose to be able to counter a lot of these questions, (then) you really have to know Christianity as well as you have to know Buddhism, I just don't, and I don't want to either!

S: Not everybody needs to, but I think there should be some people within the movement who have a knowledge of these things. I've certainly always been interested in having that sort of knowledge.

Vangisa: Very often when people talk about Christianity, it becomes obvious fairly quickly they are not really talking about Christianity, I mean nowadays, people tend to think in terms of the heretical mystics, for instance, not orthodox Christian teaching.

S: Right.

Vangisa: And when they make their point, what is the difference? Then of course you will find (there) may appear ... exactly the same ideas, but it is of course quite different to say that the aims of orthodox Christianity and the aims of Buddhism are the same thing.

S: Well sometimes they are totally ignorant of orthodox Christianity.

Vangisa: Exactly, yes.

S: For instance I remember when I was at the Hampstead vihara there was an English bhikkhu around called Mangala, and he was very much into Christianity, though he was supposed to be a bhikkhu.

Vangisa: He was the president.

S: That's right, yes. Anyway, he used to say that they were really, virtually the same, and we had quite an argument one day. And I said 'how can you say that they are the same?' For instance, according to the thirty nine articles of the Church of England 'Christ ascended into heaven' - I think he was making a point that the Church of England was very liberal - 'Christ ascended into heaven in his physical body'. So he said 'no the Church of England has never taught that, it has a spiritual meaning, it's allegorical.' This was his great point, everything was 'allegorical'. So I said 'no, the teaching of the Church of England as of all orthodox churches is that 'Christ ascended into heaven bodily.'" So he said 'no, you've just been out of touch for too long, you've been out in India for too long, you just don't know.' 'All right, let's have a look.' So he got a copy of the bible and the Book of Common Prayer, which [226] had actually the thirty nine articles, and there it was, that 'he ascended into heaven along with his blood, body, bones and all that appertaineth thereto.' He was absolutely astonished. He said 'Well I never. Well he hadn't read the thirty-nine articles.' And here was he busily allegorising everything and saying that I was giving a very narrow and very prejudiced account of Christianity, but no, that's orthodox Christianity. And (they) tried to compare Buddhism with some highly idealized selective version of their own, a purely private version of their own

which has never existed in history.

Vangisa(?): Or even (says) selective quotations from the sermon of the mount.

S: Yes, and when you refer them to actual history, the actual Christian Church, (they'll) say 'Ah that's not 'real' Christianity: you can't take any notice of that.' Which is so ridiculous. (Pause.) So one wants a really rigorous comparison really, what we reject most decisively, what we can accept and incorporate as it were.

Asvajit: In order to be able to decisively reject it's often necessary to sound convincing to add a ring of truth to what one says to have some direct experience of it, where a doctrine of Christianity had you've actually seen in operation.

S: Well I saw missionaries in action, in India. You know, I saw what they did to the Tibetans. I've seen Christian missionaries holding out a bag of flour to a wretched Tibetan refugee, and a tract in the other hand, and say 'Well if you want to get this flour, you've got to listen to this sermon first!' I've actually seen that. And there they are, they are waiting and they are hungry but they are not allowed to take the food until they've listened to the lecture or the sermon.

___: In the South of India I travelled on a train with an Indian Christian minister - he was proudly saying that they gave two weeks worth of rice to people, to Indians, who had converted to Christianity.

S: Hum, yes, yes.

___: Like 14 days indulgence!

S: Right! And this leads me to another point, in future we have to be much more outspoken, much more openly contradict current ideas - traditional Western and Christian ideas. This was another thing about the Buddhist Society and ourselves in the early days, always sort of falling all over ourselves to agree with everything and everybody, and avoid causing offence. 'Oh, of course Jesus was a great bodhisattva, etc, etc. you see, if not Buddha'.

Vangisa: (I had that kind of experience) last week. I just realized that a certain amount of micchaditthi -(was) prevailing. People were getting hardened... I just had to clear the air, just had to be absolutely certain what we were talking about and meant what we were talking about.

S: For instance that Buddhism is non-theistic, and it's no use trying to 'smuggle God in by the back door', and say 'well it's Buddhahood, God, it all means the same thing, why quarrel about words?' No. There are two quite distinct ideas.

Vangisa: ... Exactly the ... (inaudible)

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S: The Buddhist Society was very good at that sort of muddled thinking in the old days, or the Buddhist vihara - the Hampstead Buddhist vihara - too for that matter. So I also predict this, a greater clarity of thought, hopefully, and greater precision, and a greater confidence, and clarity. Also, not allowing people to regard us as sort of eccentric and difficult, because we

happen to be Buddhists. Very often Christians have this sort of attitude. There is the author of a book I've just reviewed has this sort of attitude almost, as though, if you want to be a Buddhist you are just being tiresome and eccentric and difficult. Being a Buddhist out of sheer perversity as it were. 'But of course you couldn't really want to be a Buddhist of course not, who could having been brought up in a Christian country? You can't be taken seriously, you are wanting a Buddhist.' They are very sort of patronizing and dismissive in this sort of way - especially the clergy. So you have to make it quite clear 'No! I reject Christianity! I just don't believe any bit of it!' May be certain sayings of Christ are good acceptable sayings, some of the things the mystics have said, but the whole dogmatic structure, the 'father' who 'created' the heavens and the earth, the incarnation of the son of God, the virgin birth, vicarious atonement, the real presence, I just don't accept any of it at all. Papal infallibility, heaven, hell, eternal punishment, predestination, prevenient grace, no, I don't accept any of it. I do not believe that the bible is the word of God, I do not believe that Christ is the son of God, I do not believe that he is the incarnation of God. I do not believe that 'god' created the universe whether in seven days, or six days or six centuries, or six aeons - I don't believe it at all. I reject it!' We have to be quite clear. 'I do not believe that salvation is by believing in the saving blood of Jesus. I believe that that is sheer delusion!'

Vangisa: Christianity is the greatest disaster that ever happened to mankind!

S: Did I say that once?

Vangisa: No, I did! (Laughter.) You said something like it.

S: No, I think I said 'Western man'.

Vangisa: Ah!

S: How can one overlook the Crusades, the Inquisition, the massacre of the heretics, the massacre of the Albigenses, the Waldenenses, the Cathars, how can one overlook these; is that a little accident? Have they ever regretted it? Have they repented of it?

Vangisa: Temporary aberration.

S: Never! If we had lived even a couple of hundred years ago, we would have been burnt at the stake, and we would be burned at the stake now if some people had the power, so let's be under no illusions. I think we have to be much more outspoken and bold. And I feel that we are going to get more and more away from conventional Eastern Buddhism. I think this has started happening already. Have you seen any changes in that respect?

Vangisa: Oh, yes, definitely.

S: In what way?

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Vangisa: Well for a start the idea that Buddhism was a conglomeration of specific sects - Eastern sects, Theravadin sect, Zen, all this kind of thing, definitely.

S: As are trotted out one by one at the summer school!

Vangisa: This (follows) something which you were trying to make clear from the start which other people didn't understand, and I can remember one instance and someone failed to understand it very strongly the idea that, well, I think in a sense you could say we have stopped thinking about Buddhism in the sense of an abstract thing, we are concerned with something much more definite, much more real.

S: For our own experience and our own lives ...

Vangisa: Exactly, yes.

S: But I think we've stopped looking Eastward, despite our rather nice Tibetan-type illustrations and so on. In that sense they are not to be taken too seriously; they are just decorative.

___: I think that even in the very brief time that I've been coming along here, about two years ago, as a beginner, the kind of explanations I got when I first came along was that, the FWBO was working on developing a Western form of Buddhism. And the things I hear people saying nowadays is that, 'well it's here'. They are not speaking in the future tense.

S: Well, in a way you don't have to think about developing it if you are true to your own experience and you are trying to evolve and speak to other people here in this country, well, a Western Buddhism will emerge without your having to take any thought about it at all, as such.

___: Well I think the thing that people are saying is this 'Well it's here!' 'this is it!'

S: We certainly have fewer and fewer people wandering off to India.

Vangisa: We don't have people (Inaudible) various other places.

S: I think people are much less thrown off their feet by the appearance over the horizon of some new person in yellow, orange, red or green robes.

___: Green robes?

___: It seems they have hardly any effect at all on us. I mean there has been a little rash of Tibetans coming over recently. Well I think a few people went to see (Sogyal Gyantse?) at Brent House, just to visit there, I mean there was no - as far as we were concerned it was just something that was happening.

S: Whereas right at the beginning and for a few years, if some Zen teacher turned up, the whole movement would sort of heave, wouldn't it?

___: A few months ago a number of us went to a talk given by a lama at Friend's House and we handed out FWBO literature outside.' (laughter.)

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___: We did it when the Dalai Lama came!

Lokamitra: I think it's quite good. People go along to see these things, they see what we've got, they seem to appreciate it.

S: So, for instance, when the Japanese monks have been around, and they are very good people individually, but, anyway the only two people who've been initiated are Petronella and Lance. And Lance came to see me the other day, not wearing his yellow robe... He seems to be on his way out.

___: He hadn't been initiated?

S: Yes. Well in the sense that he had his head shaved, and he was given the yellow robe.

___: When he was talking to me he made out it was just something he had done because he wanted somewhere to live for a time.

S: Well, he wasn't quite so frank with me.

___: That's something that's definitely happening, we are putting our finger on it a bit now. But it's as if we really are moving into completely unforeseen territory in that respect. Our whole idea of what we are, our whole identity, our self-image is undergoing subtle changes, which are taking us, I think, further and further away from where we began. I think that's going to more and more emerge that we are just something utterly different to anything that's been before us or around us.

S: It's also noticeable, for instance it's been said, I think, by Dr Conze, that at each stage in the development of Buddhism, there was a quite different ideal, or at least quite different presentation of the ideal. In the very early period it was the 'Muni'. Then it was in the later, more Hinayanistic period it was the Arahant. Then the ideal figure was the Bodhisattva - therefore the Mahayana. Then for the Vajrayana it was the 'siddha' - the perfect one; the Tantric adept, like Padmasambhava. Then the ideal for Chan and Zen was the 'roshi'. And so on. So may be a quite different sort of spiritual ideal or quite different formulation of the ideal, you know, is to emerge for the modern age, as it were; and probably in the West. We can draw something from all of those ideals and get some inspiration from them all, but perhaps it's time for another formulation.

Vangisa: (Inaudible?) we are not looking over our shoulders at anybody. We are developing ourselves with full confidence and we seem now, looking at the whole world situation, that we are the mainstream of Buddhist development rather than, say, Japan.

S: Well, it was pointed out by somebody, not so very long ago, that there were now more people meditating in Zen monasteries in America than in Japan. (Laughter.) Yes!

Vangisa: But even so they are (meditating) in 'Zen' monasteries.

S: Yes, in Zen style, even though slightly modified.

Vangisa: Exactly. That means that in a sense it's off the mainstream of development, which is exactly what it seems to me increasingly, we are the mainstream.

Asvajit: From our point of view the Zen movement seems a bit like a [230] dinosaur with sort of (?) attached and skin put on the outside.

S: Yes. I think that we are able to go further back. We are radical in the true sense. 'Radical' comes from the Latin word meaning simply 'root'. A radical is the one who goes back to the roots, to real fundamentals. So we go back for instance in traditional terms, back to the three refuges. Who emphasizes the going for refuge in the way we do? Nobody does. Well, it's in a way, the most basic and most obvious thing the absolute essential thing. So, if we are the mainstream it's because in a sense we've kept to the fundamentals. Whereas some of the other movements have been occupied much more with secondary and peripheral things; that you must sit facing a wall or something like that. Tibetan Buddhism though is very, very fine as a spiritual tradition, may be second to none. But for Westerners is so much bound up with Tibetan culture, not to say Tibetan history, geography and current Politics. But it does seem that our distinctiveness will emerge more and more in the future. We shall become as it were, more and more Buddhist in a sense, but also less and less like any other Buddhist movement.

Mangala: Perhaps the most significant aspect of the Friends is just the Sangha, that's where it differs mostly from other Buddhist organizations in that there is a very strong feeling of Sangha and ...

S: (No one) doesn't have this in any other spiritual group, for want of a better term, in this country. I doubt if they've got anything like it in the States. And certainly I don't think it had been kept up to this pitch in the Buddhist countries in Asia. Certainly a strong sense of group solidarity, but it was more that actually, and that was because the element of individual commitment was not stressed and again perhaps because the going for refuge was not stressed. So if you stress the going for refuge, well that must be an individual commitment. If you have a committed individual, or if you have a number of committed individuals, then you have a Sangha - not otherwise.

Mangala: I mean, our group (sorry to use the word 'group') if you like is very small, but it's very sort of consolidated and I think there is a lot of depth to that; we've all been around and known each other for quite some time. There is a lot of solidity there, it's not a fleeting thing.

S: Though, in a way, nine years isn't very long. Think how things will be when you've been around twenty, thirty, forty years. There are many generations of Order members come up after you. And you really are the sort of fathers of the movement, fathers of the Order. I mean people will come to visit you in your cave. (Laughter.) (And) at the age of ninety, with long white hair and long white beard, you know? Listening to one of the ancient venerable sages that remembered the early days. And they will come to ask you about projects, their latest ten-foot high solid gold image, and you say 'I don't think Lokamitra would have approved of spending all that money on this gold image! Not in the old days!' (laughter.) So go and melt it down and build ten new centres! But it is strange in a way that, I mean as far as I remember, when I was in the East, when I was in contact with Buddhist monks of so many different kinds, the emphasis was never on going for refuge; it was not even mentioned to me I think by anybody, except a little bit by some of the Tibetans, but not in the way that we mention it. And no emphasis on Sangha, but there was some experience of it, you could hardly help that, if you were all involved in Buddhism to some extent, but it certainly wasn't clear and aware, as though that emphasis had been entirely lost.

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It does seem to be much the sort of emphasis that is needed nowadays in the West. One is not even a healthy group, what to speak of a spiritual community. May be that's another thing we have to do more work on in the future - the healthy group, or the positive group, as the basis for the spiritual community. In other words, the whole sort of society in a very healthy positive way.

___: Do you think perhaps the aspect of non-harming and tolerance is something else in Buddhism that hasn't been up front like it could have been?

S: Do you mean in the sort of social and political context?

___: Yes.

S: May be. May be we have to think about that later on. But we have to consolidate ourselves and be strong ourselves before we can venture into these other, very difficult fields where it's so easy to go wrong. Anyway, it's five-past four. (Pause.)

All right let's start. It's Sutta six. It's translated as 'Of suffering.' Would someone like to read through the whole sutta and then we'll go through it verse by verse. (Pause.) Anyone willing to volunteer? Who feels like reading? I think Khema does.' (Laughter.)

Khema: (6) Of Suffering

Thus have I heard: 'Once, when the Master was dwelling near Savatthi in Anathapindika's Park at Jeta Grove, a devi of surpassing beauty, lighting up the whole of Jeta Grove, approached him as night waned - and drawing near, she saluted him and stood at one side. Thus standing she spoke this verse to the Master:

Devi: 'About man's suffering
We question Gotama:
We ask the Master now
The source of suffering.'

The Master: 'Plain is the weal in life,
Plain is the suffering:
Prosper who Dharma loves,
Suffers who Dharma hates.'

Devi: 'Tis truly so we know
Firstly of suffering:
Tell us secondly
The source of suffering.'

The Master: 'Who hath bad men as friends,
Nor maketh friends with good,
Who chooses bad men's ways:
A source of suffering that.'

Devi: "Tis truly so we know...
Tell us the third...'

The Master: 'When man loves company
And sleep, when he is lax

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And slack and known for wrath:
A source of suffering that.'

Devi: "Tis truly so we know...
Tell us the fourth...'

The Master: 'Who being rich supports
Not parents in their age,
When gone is all their youth:
A source of suffering that.'

Devi: "Tis truly so we know...
Tell us the fifth ...'

The Master: 'Who with false words deceives
A brahman or recluse
Or other mendicant:
A source of suffering that.'

Devi: "Tis truly so we know...
Tell us the sixth...'

The Master: 'When man of wealth and means,
Of gold and property,
Enjoys its sweets alone:
A source of suffering that.'

Devi: "Tis truly so we know...
Tell us the seventh...'

The Master: 'When man is proud of birth
And purse and family,
And yet ashamed of kin:
A source of suffering that.'

Devi: "Tis truly so we know...
Tell us the eighth...'

The Master: 'When man on woman dotes,
On drink and dice alike,
And all his savings wastes:
A source of suffering that.'

Devi: "Tis truly so we know...
Tell us the ninth...'

The Master: 'Who, not content with his,
Is seen with others' wives,
Is seen with harlots too:
A source of suffering that.'

Devi: "Tis truly so we know...
Tell us the tenth ...'

The Master: 'When man, passed youth, doth wed
A maid with rounded breasts
Nor sleeps for jealousy
A source of suffering that.'

Devi: "Tis truly so we know...
Tell us the eleventh...'

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The Master: 'When woman or when man,
A spendthrift or a sot,
Is placed in sovran power:
A source of suffering that.'

Devi: "Tis truly so we know...
Th' eleventh suffering:
Now tell us, sir, the twelfth,
The source of suffering.'

The Master: 'When born of noble clan,
A man is poor and craves
For much and longs to rule:
A source of suffering that.'

These sufferings in the world
The wise discern, and blest
With vision Ariyan,
They seek the world of bliss.'

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S: First of all a few words about the title. The title of the sutta is Parabhava Sutta. This is translated by Hare as 'Of Suffering' and by Chalmers as 'Failures'. But it doesn't mean that at all, it doesn't mean either of those things really. 'Bhava'; 'bhava' means 'becoming'. It means development. Probably you are familiar with the word 'bhavana' which we usually translate as 'meditation' - sometimes as 'cultivation'. There is the compound term 'shamatha-bhavana' - which means the 'development of calm'. 'Shamata'. Then there is 'Vipassana-bhavana' the 'development of insight.' So 'bhavana' means 'becoming' in the sense of developing and it's from a verbal root meaning 'to make become', to 'bring into existence.' So it's very powerful

and positive word. So 'bhava' also means this; bhava is development or that which has been developed, or is being developed, that which has been cultivated, is being cultivated. So 'bhava' can be used as a sort of term for the spiritual life. It's an upward movement; it's progression. Now 'parabhava' is the opposite of that. Sometimes it's translated as 'downfall'. It means 'defeat', ruin and destruction. So you've got 'bhava' and 'parabhava'; you've got development and the opposite of development. We don't really have a proper opposite in English, do we? What's the opposite of development? Something like degeneration.

___: Regression.

S: Regression too. It's not only going back but going down. Downfall is not bad. So this particular sutta is sometimes paired with, or contrasted with the Mangala Sutta. The Mangala Sutta is based as it were, on the progressive order of things. You go from blessing to blessing, from lower blessing to higher blessing until you come to the ultimate blessing - the blessing of Nirvana itself. But here you're falling from step to step down, just like a ball bouncing all the way down a flight of stairs, from the top stair, or top step right down to the last one, the bottom-most one. That's 'downfall', defeat, ruin, destruction, so it's the opposite process. So this sutta is concerned with this opposite process as opposite to the progressive process described for instance in the Mangala Sutta.

So: 'Thus have I heard, Once when the Master was dwelling near Savathi in Anathapindika's Park at Jeta Grove a devi of surpassing beauty, lighting up the whole of Jeta Grove, approached Him as night waned.'

Apparently the time of the waning of night, the hour or two just before dawn, just before it started becoming light, was the hour at which these spiritual beings approached the Buddha.

'And drawing near she saluted Him and Stood at one side, thus standing she spoke this verse to the Master'. 'About man's suffering we question Gotama, we ask the Master now, the source of suffering.'

Now it is not suffering, it's not dukkha, you might think that this was 'dukkha' but, no. She is asking about 'downfall', she is asking about 'parabhava', what is the cause of downfall? Why does a person go to defeat and ruin and destruction? What is the cause of that? So you can see the translation is a bit misleading. (Pause) So she is asking about 'parabhava'. Why does a person deteriorate? Why do they regress? Why do they degenerate? Why do they go on a course opposite to that of progress and development and cultivation? So the Buddha tells her.

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'Plain is the wheel of life, plain is the suffering; prospers who dharma loves, suffers who dharma hates.'

You can see that the translation is very misleading if you say: 'the man who hates the dharma suffers', that's quite a different thing from saying 'the man who hates dharma deteriorates'. The man who hates dharma may not suffer in a worldly sense at all. He may have a thoroughly good time. So, the man who hates dharma deteriorates, declines, falls. And in the same way the man who loves dharma prospers. (Pause)

The term which is translated as 'loves dharma'- is 'dhammakamo'. 'Kama' which is the usual

word for 'passion', even sensuous desire. So it's 'loves' in a very strong sense, who is very thoroughly devoted to dharma, who has a sort of passionate love for dharma - that is the man who progresses. And the man who is antagonistic to dharma declines. (Pause)

So perhaps this draws attention to an aspect of things - that we often overlook. Sometimes we think in terms of studying the dharma, practising the dharma, teaching the dharma but we don't, so often perhaps, think in terms of loving the dharma. But this in a way is the basic thing: to be really devoted to the dharma - even to be passionately devoted to the dharma.

Dhammadinna: Well you can't do the other three things - well, unless you feel ...

S: No you can't, not really. You can put up a pretty good show, but it is a 'show'. You have got to really love what you are doing and you only do that when you, as it were, love the Dharma, the dharma in its widest and deepest sense. The truth as reflected especially in the Buddha's teaching or as reflected in the spiritual life itself, or as reflected in one's own mind even. So again this draws attention to the importance of the feeling element. To love what you are doing, just like the artist loves his materials. So that the Buddhist who doesn't love the dharma is a strange sight indeed ... So that one should progress if one loves the dharma, and deteriorate if one hates the dharma this is surely quite plain and obvious. (Pause)

So the devi says:

'Tis truly so, we know, firstly of suffering.
Sir tell us secondly, the source of suffering.'

She is asking again and again because she is aware as it were, there is not just one source or cause of downfall. There are many contributing factors. Or in the case of certain people, certain factors may be more operative, may be conducing more to their particular downfall or decline or deterioration. So she asks: again, she is not satisfied as it were with the first answer. So then the Buddha as it were tries again.

Who hath bad men as friends, Nor maketh friends with good,
Who chooses bad men's ways, a source of suffering that.'

A source of decline, a source of downfall. Let's just look at the original. 'Asant' 'assa'? The good man is the 'sant'; it's a bit like the holy man. It's not just good in the ordinary ethical sense: the spiritual man as it were. (Pause) A more accurate translation would be 'to whom spiritual people are dear, beloved.' In other words this particular verse emphasizes the importance of kalyana mitrata. This is what it's really talking about - spiritual friendship, spiritual association, (satt-sang?). So it seems to me that this is mentioned second. The first cause of downfall is not to love the dharma. The second cause is to associate with or to love unspiritual people, people who are not interested in spiritual things. May not be sort of bad people in the criminal sense. May be very good [236] people in a sense, but bad from the spiritual point of view; may be just very respectable people. Very, very stultifying (and) very stuffy. So in positive terms, if one wants to progress and develop the most important thing is first to love the dharma, and then to associate with good spiritual friends.

Lokamitra: It takes time to love the dharma, to get the feel for the dharma-life.

S: The text here, Hare translates 'who chooses bad men's ways'. It's not quite that. It's those who follow the dharma, the way or principle or custom of those who are not good, whose who are not spiritual. Those who delight in 'roceti', those who delight in or take delight in, the way or principles or conduct of the bad, of the non-spiritual.

So, loving the dharma, associating with spiritual friends, these are causes of progress, development and the opposites, that is to say, disliking the dharma, or associating with bad friends, these are the two most important causes of downfall, at least the first two to be mentioned.

Any query or comment on that? There is kalyana mitrata, and those who are fresh from retreat should have experienced it quite strongly there.

Dhammadinna: We usually see the two things going on. You can see people spiralling (up) the spiral, and you can see people spiralling down the spiral. (We have seen) a bit of both last week. Some people pull people down, some people pull people up - even in the context of a mitra retreat. Sometimes there is a sort of conflict going on in the situation.

S: (What) the upward and downward movement?

Dhammadinna: Pull, yes.

S: In what way do people tend to be downward pulling influences do you find?

Dhammadinna: Well if they are negative, if they are not putting effort in, if they are not really kind of too bothered about ...

S: But they are merely there...

Dhammadinna: They are merely there.

: But taking from a situation not giving. It happens in all sorts of ways, in every situation and that has a downward pulling effect on everybody, and you have to be really strong to pull it in the other direction. And it happens with running a dharma study group. Some people aren't really in a study group because they want to learn the dharma, they are there because - I don't know why they are there, all sorts of different reasons - they' want to use the situation to have all their problems out and so on, and that pulls everything down.

: I think you've experienced this quite strongly!

: You just begin to see very clearly where people are at in that situation.

Lokamitra?: It took me quite some time after the ordination to appreciate really the dharma as a refuge, and really have a strong feel for, well I like to think in terms of the dharma-life, or the dharma-faring life, I think that ...

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S: But there is a term by the way, 'dharmachariya' or 'dharmachari' just as there is 'brahmachari', there is 'dharmachari', which is much the same thing from a somewhat different

point of view. So there is 'brahmachari' and the 'brahmachariya', the 'dharmachari' and the 'dharmachariya'. And the 'bodhichariya' of course, that's the fully Mahayanistic term. Perhaps I'll just say a few words about these three because I never mentioned them in a row in this way before, but they do in a way hang together. You could say that 'brahmachariya' - and I've spoken a bit about this in a previous study session, so I won't go into that again now. But 'brahmachariya' is, as it were, a pre-buddhistic term used by the Buddha. Just as he used 'brahmana' for instance - it's the holy life, the noble life, brahmachariya. And then there is 'dharmachariya', practising the dharma, the dharma life, the dharma practice which is much more specifically 'Buddhist' as it were. Then there is 'bodhichariya'; the 'bodhi' life, the life of wisdom and enlightenment which is much more specifically Mahayanistic. So you've got 'brahmachariya', 'dharmachariya', 'bodhichariya', all meaning, more or less, the same thing but, within more and more specifically Buddhist contexts as it were. (Pause.) Sometimes - as in the Bodhicharyavatara they speak simply of the 'chariya' - the faring, the life, just that, without any prefix - just the 'chariya' - the 'walking on'. So the devi says:

'tis truly so we know, tell us the third!

She wants to know a third source. Then the Buddha says:

'When man loves company and sleep, when he is lax and slack
And known for wrath - a source of suffering that.'

That's a source of decline and downfall and deterioration. Let's look at the Pali terms. Ah! 'Niddasili sabhasili', let's go into that a bit. 'Niddasili' - the order of the adjectives is reversed in the translation. That's quite interesting 'nidda' is sleep of course! Just a coincidence. 'Sili' - that's rather interesting. That's the same word as 'sila' - 'sila' simply means 'habit' or 'practice'. But the connotation is good habit or good practice. In that way it comes to mean something like 'ethics'. So in a more general sense 'sila' is something practised; 'sili' is someone who practises. So 'niddasili' is the sleepy person; the person who is of sleep practice or sleep habit. Do you get the idea? So 'niddasili', 'sabhasili'. 'Sabha' means a meeting, or company. So 'sabhasili' it's quite difficult to translate these into English - is 'one who is habituated to company' it's more like that. Someone who is always seeking out company, who can't be alone. So this is a source or cause of downfall. So the translator has 'when man loves company and sleep'. That's not bad, but it's more, it's when sleep and company have become a habit. They are your sort of normal way of life, that you are always with other people and you are always sort of half asleep. 'And lax and lazy' and known as a wrathful person. Not only wrathful but you are so habitually wrathful that you get a reputation for being wrathful. Do you think there is any connection between these things? First of all, loving sleep or being of sleepy habit; always seeking out company, being lazy and remiss; and being angry. Doesn't that seem to come in a bit incongruously, or at least it's a bit different from the others - is there any connection between them do you think? On the one hand you are of sleepy habit; you are gregarious, you are remiss or lax and lazy. On the other you are habitually a bad tempered person, you are known to be wrathful.

___: It's all sort of a very negative attitude towards oneself.

S: Yes, that's true.

___: If one sleeps, one doesn't

S: One doesn't want to face up to things including one's own self. And you seek company, why? You can't bear to be with your own self, alone. And why are you lazy, why don't you make an effort? You don't think it's worth making an effort, you don't think that you are worth making an effort. After all what does making an effort mean? That you progress, you develop, that means you have a positive attitude towards yourself. So you may be very sort of resentful, and this may show itself in relation to other people, so you may become angry, bad tempered.

___: It seems to be resentful anger if you go on retreat, you (did not) make an effort, then perhaps (?).

S: But when you are resentful you don't feel like making an effort, do you? You think 'well, why should I?' (Laughter.)

Lokamitra: You can't make an effort because your energies are tied up in this resentment, so you just want to go back to sleep or you just don't want to move, or you just want to be with people, so...

___: And also I knew one of the people who's very resentful and angry had a problem of falling asleep in meditation.

S: You just withdraw from the situation. You mean she did fall asleep during meditation?

: Yes, she kept on falling asleep, she found very difficult not to.

S: Well sometimes you do that when you don't really want to be there.

: Yes.

Marichi: Isn't that the same thing?

S: Same thing as?

Marichi: Not wanting to be there will be the same as not facing that situation.

S: Yes, right.

Marichi: It also happens when there is a lot of inner conflict going on, which is the negativity coming out.

S: There is isn't just one self, as it were, to be there.

'Tis truly so we know'

This devi seems to be quite well informed! (Laughter.)

'Tell us the (fourth?)

So the Buddha let's her have it.'

'Who being rich supports not parents in their age
When gone is all their youth; a source of suffering that.'

A source of downfall. Remember in those days there was no such thing as 'old age pensions' - you relied on your children. I mean the ordinary person relied on his children or her children to support them in their old age. So why do you think it's a source or cause of downfall, or your own personal spiritual deterioration if you fail [239] to support your old parents? What's the connection? What does it imply?

___: That you are selfish.

S: Yes, you are selfish, also it says 'who being rich, supports not parents in their age!'

___: So you could do it, but you choose not to.

S: You choose not to. So yes, selfishness, callousness, ingratitude.

___: Not facing up to your responsibilities.

S: Not facing up to your responsibilities. A negative attitude perhaps towards your parents; forgetfulness.

___: And the negative attitude relates to the one before, does not it?

S: Yes, indeed. Well you are getting more and more negative, you are crashing down from stair to stair as it were. Going (down) more all the time. And obviously the suggestion is that if you are in a position to do so, it's a good positive thing, contributing to your own personal development, if you do help and look after your old parents, who are not able to look after themselves. Now of course you very rarely get parents as old and incapable as that, but it still applies to some extent.

Siddhiratna: There always seems to be a problem with this sort of idea, Bhante, in terms of altering the way you live as their son, and the way they expect to be kept in their situation as it were.

S: But it doesn't mean that one shouldn't be independent or shouldn't lead one's own life.

Siddhiratna: But as such it may mean that you are not able to give them help, or help that they expect even.

S: Well it's not only what they expect, but what is objectively needed. They may be, not in any need of help or support from you, but they may have psychological expectations. Or they may want something from you materially as a sign that you do care, as it were. Well that isn't very positive; one should not, as it were, be emotionally blackmailed into giving that kind of help. But obviously the text, or the Buddha has in mind a quite simple and straightforward case of parents who are old and with no one to look after them, who are in need, and you as a son or as a daughter are quite well off, are quite capable of sending them some grain or

vegetables or whatever, and you just don't bother to, you just don't care to. That's the sort of simple situation the Buddha has in mind.

___: I think it's got more complex now...

S: It has indeed

___: And that it's a welfare state concern, the food and stuff, but it's the loneliness that seems to be the sort of main problem, and loneliness implies that you have to spend a certain amount of time, or perhaps you even have to live with them to...

S: I've heard quite a bit on the radio and seen quite a bit in the papers about this thing, of old people being lonely. I can't help feeling it's their own fault because they live next door to other people and they complain of being lonely. You've only got to knock [240] on your next door neighbour's door, but that the sort of thing English people won't do. And you say 'oh I am lonely, my son's and daughters never come to see me; no one ever comes to see me', and there is people all around you. Where you are in such a rut, you know, you don't even want to make friends with them - 'Oh no.' I wouldn't like to speak with her' - that's what people say very often. So it's not so much that old people are lonely, in the sense of being absolutely isolated, that's nonsense. Hardly any old person is isolated in that sort of way; but they are just in such a rut mentally, and won't sort of move out of that rut. If they are physically incapacitated, that's another matter, but many old people are not. So I think many old people are not. So I think we have to be quite realistic about this, if old people whom we know or are related to complain about loneliness say 'well it's your own fault, you have got neighbours, you can go along to a club or some sort of social gathering'. But if you talk about those things to them, they say 'Oh I don't like to go along there' or 'I don't like the people who go there', or 'I don't like my next door neighbour', etc, etc. And they are insisting on you coming. And why is this? They complain of being lonely and all that as a means of sort of dragging you along instead of getting on with their own life and their own social activities and their own friends. So, yes, surely do something if something is objectively needed, but don't let the old folks pull the wool over your eyes as it were.

Lokamitra: Something I've noticed around here with the older people; they do get together a lot. They don't hide themselves away and they are quite cheerful in their own way.

: Mind you they've got lots of relations most of them living in the area.

Lokamitra: It's a very community sort of ...

S: But even if you haven't got relations you've got neighbours, and you live side by side, year after year, and you don't even know your next door neighbour. This is the sort of thing that happens, and then you complain of loneliness...

: It's the more middle-class people I think who tend to do this.

S: I think you are right, yes.

: I don't know, I mean it's a problem in blocks of flats and they are not necessarily middle-class.

S: And you can still go and knock on the door of the person who lives next door, or upstairs or downstairs.

: It's one of the biggest problems they have in blocks of flats, in trying to get people to meet each other and get to know each other.

S: I think it's more the English inhibition against friendliness and sociability than anything else.

: I don't think it's entirely that because when you take working class people out of an area like this where they have friendly, you stick them in a tower block, they just don't relate apparently.

S: Well why?

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___: It seems something to do with the situation in itself, an alienating situation...

___: The environment that they stick them in...

Marichi: There is no neutral ground.

___: There is no point hanging over the back garden fence.

S: Why can't you just go downstairs and knock on someone's door and say 'well you'll have to come up and have a cup of tea!'

___: Don't know, it just doesn't seem to happen!

S: That's what I am saying!

Lokamitra: You do notice something in the street, the old ladies will very rarely invite each other in.

Dhammadinna: It's all done in the street, and on the doorstep and in the backyard you see, and that situation doesn't exist in a tower block. All you've got is this corridor which is really faceless in any (?).

S: It seems quite odd. If you want friends I am sure you can have them even if you live in a tower block.

___: Yeh, but it's much harder... and so (?) follow, I mean they have to make new habits, which they don't seem to be capable of doing.

Siddhiratna: It is not that the situation and the environment makes it difficult, I think it's just something about the consciousness of the people and the way they've been conditioned etc., etc., and perhaps even the quality of 'Englishness'.

Marichi: Also, once you start living up there you do start getting into a situation of bad health.

You can't go out, it gets harder to do that. It gets harder physically as well as emotionally.

Dhammadinna: But may be some have the physical difficulties because of the emotional difficulties.

___: Oh yes.

S: But you also see people in the shops, don't you? If you go out shopping or you see them at the post office etc., or if you go along to the church and usually there is a church around the corner, you meet them there.

Lokamitra: A lot of it seems, you get fed by the welfare state, you expect to be fed emotionally and so on, and you just sort of sit back and ...

S: You expect 'love on wheels'.

Lokamitra: Right, it just doesn't happen.

___: It's funny but, in the street where my parents have lived for years here are some old people, two old ladies living alone, and one is completely happy, occasionally she has visitors to stay and neighbours pop in, she is fine; she is about eighty five. The other old lady, she just drives everybody away. She is the one who complains [242] of loneliness, it's interesting. She has people who do do things for her and after a time she just so unpleasant to them, they stop. She seems to be self-destructive.

___: It proves how much more difficult it is to change at that age.

S: Yes, indeed. One sees this very clearly. The older you are, the more difficult change becomes, even if you want to change, or are trying to change. I am beginning to think that the earlier people can come in contact with the Friends, the better. Best is in your teens, as you did. (Pause.) I don't think you can go far wrong then, quite honestly. (Laughter.) I don't mean (?). I mean any body who comes in contact with the Friends at that impressionable age.

___: Well one can, it's a matter whether they stay.

S: They can if they really tried as it were. They can go wrong then! (Laughter)

___: They ought to at least once.

S: I don't know! (Laughter.) I've become - well I've always been a bit sceptical about that sort of line of thought. I know that most of the people who've come into the Friends so far, have come through, come into it after, as it were, after being pulled through the hedge backwards! (Laughter.) And they come in a terrible state having to be sort of 'patched up' and put on their feet, sort of stagger up the path - but I think we have to accept and recognize that not everybody may come in that way. That we may get some people who come in innocent and unspoilt. I mean we don't have to go through all these terrible traumatic things, just plunge straight in, in a happy healthy sort of way, and never look back. So if such people do come in we wouldn't (se?) shouldn't sort of say to them 'oh no, you really got to go through it first, you know, I really went through it' (laughter). You've got to see a bit of life and etc., etc.

Siddhiratna: Do they understand what 'dukkha' means if they don't have some sort of unpleasant experiences, Bhante?

___: Will they understand what dukkha means?

S: But 'dukkha' is not suffering. In the real sense 'dukkha' is not suffering, not just in the sense of painful experience. In every experience is 'dukkha'. One, because it comes to an end, even the happy experiences, and two, because it isn't ultimately satisfying. It's all right as far as it goes; it doesn't go all that far. So it's dukkha in that sense. So you are not necessarily closer to understanding the truth of dukkha, because there has been more pain and suffering in your life. There are quite a few people who experience a lot of pain and suffering but get no glimpse of the truth of dukkha at all.

___: Wasn't there that thing, about the amount of Buddha seeds one had, etc., and the ones down the bottom (of the Wheel of Life) in the hell realms had more Buddha seeds because they were suffering more, and there (it) could make enlightenment easier than the others, and that the human realm (?).

S: No, I don't think it's quite meant in that sense. But if you are [243] suffering it does make you think. It makes you think why you are suffering. But there are people, there can be people, who are sort of happy, cheerful, optimistic nature who go through life without suffering very much, but still with some insight and they still do develop spiritually. I don't think you have to suffer in that sort of traumatic way, in the sense of getting really involved and in difficulties and emotional upheavals. You will have your share of suffering, you will at least lose your parents, you will lose your near and dear friends through death, you will experience some kind of disappointment, you will take it in a much more healthy way. You won't be sort of overwhelmed by it, you won't be into really bad, emotional dependencies and neurotic states, and all that kind of thing. But to suggest to the young healthy, as it were, innocent person, 'you have got to go through all these (un)healthy, negative neurotic things to get anywhere' - that I think is quite wrong and misleading. It's that that I am getting at. That neurotic suffering, as it were, isn't an inevitable stage, something that everybody's got to go through. Whereas many of the people who come into the Friends so far, if not the majority, have had quite a measure of really unnecessary neurotic suffering, due to the way in which they were brought up, unfortunate happenings at home, wrong education, being exposed to the influence of wrong ideologies, wrong sort of work, wrong sort of companionship, etc, etc. So there is a lot that they've gone through that in under happier conditions, and more healthy conditions - could have been avoided. So if people come to us who by sheer luck, or the goodness of their natures, haven't so far gone through anything or experienced anything of that sort, we shouldn't say to them 'Well, you've got to go through it, it's a necessary stage to everybody's development.' It just isn't true.

___: Well the neurotic stage seems to be very difficult to get out of for some people (?) an up and upward (?). I mean it's not really, in a way ...

S: It's not just in a way something you just go through. It's not just a sort of natural stage of development.

Siddhiratna: I think the sort of thing I was thinking of was (more like) stealing apples from the orchard and stuff like that.

S: That's not, that's just sort of youthful exuberance - nothing more than that.

Siddhiratna: But if you are introduced to the spiritual ideal too early as it were, and you didn't allow that to happen etc., etc.

S: Well I don't know. I am sure you could develop spiritually even if you never had robbed orchards. I might confess personally that I have never robbed orchards! (Laughter.) I don't know where that puts me! (Laughter.) I just haven't.

___: You are a goody-goody!

___: You've missed out!

___: You haven't experienced life!

S: No orchards!

Lokamitra: They took the Tulkus, or the highest ones at a very early age in Tibet and trained them so...

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___: I wish I'd been taken at a very early age! I'd have missed all my suffering for anything...

S: Quite happily yes?

Voices: Yes. (Chorus!)

S: Well, quite a few people unfortunately, have really gone through a lot that was unnecessary, and were so unfortunate that under a better sort of system as it were, could have been avoided I am sure. (Pause.) So I think we have to be open to the possibility of very young people coming into the Movement, very innocent and relatively healthy and attracted to us at a very early age, who just don't have to go through all these things, you know, luckily for them.

___: It would be very good for the Movement.

S: Yes, it would be very rejuvenating and very inspiring. I think Marichi is looking a bit sceptical?

Marichi: No, no, I was just enjoying the fun.

S: I mean young people about half your age, you know, really young. Well it should be possible because I'd made up my mind about Buddhism when I was sixteen. I think you'd more or less made up your mind by the time you were sixteen, hadn't you - the earlier the better. Why waste any time getting on to the path? You can have fun along the path too! (Laughter.) Mindful fun! I can remember Khema in the old days dancing around the camp fire on retreats! (Laughter.) All right, on to number five. So the devi says:

'It's truly so we know. Tell us the fifth!'

'Who with false words deceives a brahman or recluse
Or other mendicant, a source of suffering that.'

So we talked about 'brahmana, shramana', the other day - the brahmin and the recluse and what all that signifies. I won't go over that ground again. 'Or other mendicant'. What is the word here for 'mendicant'? (Pause.) (The word) seems to mean 'a forest dweller'. Anyway the general meaning is clear, the brahmin here doesn't mean the caste-brahmin, it means someone who is leading a religious life, a spiritual life, within the ordinary Hindu context, or a recluse - a shramana, one who is a sort of free-lance wanderer outside the Vedic/Hindu tradition. So the Buddha is saying that it's a source of downfall to deceive with false words a person who is on the spiritual path. Now why do you think that is? This is very characteristic of the Buddhist approach by the way. What does it mean? Why is it such a serious matter, so much a source of downfall?

___: You're are shutting yourself off from them.

S: You are shutting yourself off from them, yes. You are putting up a barrier between yourself and them. If you can be honest and open with anybody surely you can be honest and open with those who are following a spiritual path - with brahmanas and shramanas, and so on. If you can't be open with them, honest with them, speak the truth with them, who can you speak it to. It means you are not even speaking it to yourself, probably. So that's a serious matter; and then in a later Buddhist context, in the context of the Vajrayana, it's considered a very, very serious offence if you don't speak the truth to your teacher or your guru, or some such respected person.

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Siddhiratna: What false words would you use with a brahmin or recluse, I mean, I can imagine false words in trying to as it were, to get their money out of them.

S: Well for instance they've got in mind something, in this sort of context, quite simple. Supposing a brahmana or shramana comes begging at the door and you don't want to give anything, so you say 'oh, I am sorry I don't have food'. This is a form of deceit. You are deceiving with false words.

Siddhiratna: Isn't there also a thing where if you haven't got enough for (him), let alone your family, let alone mendicant, there is a way of letting him know that?

S: Well, surely. You don't have to tell a lie.

___: So he passes on to the next house.

S: Yes, right. But if you did tell a lie and deceive in that sort of way, that would be quite a serious matter. (Pause.)

___: ... relating it more to our situation now. People quite often find it very difficult - they feel they've got to always say the right things to Order members, or to you.

S: That's true, yes.

___: And may be holding back what they really are wanting to say.

S: Sometimes there is just lack of precision. For instance, sometimes I have experienced people say to me, reporting on some particular situation, or something of that sort, and they are not scrupulous in giving a really accurate account. Sometimes a very distorted or garbled account reaches me. So it's much the same sort of thing really. Not that you are deliberately telling a falsehood, but you are not taking sufficient care to communicate truthful impressions, this is quite important.

___: A lot of damage can be done by giving misinformation, in half truths. It may even become distorted unconsciously - resentment for the other people - whatever.

S: Or if, sometimes it's happened there has been quite lengthy and complex discussion and you just try to give an account of it in two or three words. Well that can be very highly selective! I have sometimes had totally different accounts of such discussions from different people - you hardly know that it was the same discussion they were referring to. Or sometimes there has even been a written report of an Order meeting, and people say 'well, this just does not convey what happened; we just didn't feel it like that at all. It just doesn't represent the spirit of the whole meeting. It gives a completely wrong impression. So this may not be deliberate; this may be quite unconscious, but it is the same kind of thing in a way at least to the extent that not sufficient care has been taken to communicate a truthful impression - that's very important. Otherwise it's just one constant round of Russian gossip going on, so you know what that is don't you? I sort of whisper a phrase in Siddhiratna's ear, he whispers it in Khema's ear, then it comes back to me. It's something totally different by the time it comes back.' (Laughter.)

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___: We use to call it 'Chinese gossip'.

___: Chinese whispers! yes!

S: I heard of it as 'Russian gossip':

___: Ah well, it had probably changed by the time it got to you! (Laughter.)

S: Russia, China, yes! Must be out of your tiny Russian mind! But I mean I really felt quite, almost annoyed sometimes, in recent months even, getting such garbled reports about things. They are usually things that someone is supposed to have said. I am very sceptical now when I hear reports of what so and so is supposed to have said until I can check up personally with that person. Sometimes, I mean even when people report what I've said fine nuances are lost, or qualifications are lost. So that's quite a serious matter because it can give rise to misunderstanding. And it's also the way in which things are said, the spirit in which things are said, the general context, and atmosphere within which things are said. All this is important, it's part of the communication, if that's left out you falsify the communication. (Pause.) Well, I've mentioned before when I was in India, it was even worse, all the legendary accounts of my own life that were flying about, how I had been a fighter pilot for instance, and how I had been pope! Believe it or not, I told this elsewhere, so I won't repeat it now. But it just goes to show! (Laughter.)

___: These are among your Indian friends?

S: Yes. Indians, I am sorry to say, are not noted for their devotion to truth. They have no attention to what Dr Johnson called 'accuracy of narration'. If it sounds good it must be true, that's their sort of believing.

If they feel good telling it, well that's the truth.' I am sorry to sound so cynical, but it's just like that. The Indian has no regard for truth in this sort of sense. I am not saying all Indians are liars, but they regard factual happenings as a sort of raw material, with which they can play. Something to be worked up into impressive and spectacular form.

Marichi: Does it mean they actually start living in that way, or just think they are living in that way?

S: I am afraid it tends to come up more in the sphere of religion. In practical everyday matters they are usually as sharp as the next man. And anyway enough of that. The devi says:

'It is true, it's truly so we know, tell us the sixth!'

'When man of wealth and means, of gold and property,
Enjoys its sweets alone, a source of suffering that.'

That's not unconnected with what the Buddha says a little while before about being rich and not supporting one's old parents.

'When man of wealth and means of gold and property,
Enjoys its sweets alone, a source of downfall that.'

I think that's pretty clear and obvious, isn't it? Monopolizing things, not sharing, exploiting others even. So the devi says:

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"Tis truly so we know, tell us the seventh.'

'When man is proud of birth and purse and family,
And yet ashamed of kin, a source of suffering that' - of downfall -

Ashamed of what sort of kin do you think?

___: Poor cousins.

S: Poor cousins, yes. Poor relations. Why do you think people are ashamed of their poor relations? What makes them feel that way?

___: Presumably because he is proud of one aspect of his wealth and not the other ... (?) makes him feel some connection - other people might make it...

S: Or perhaps he has tried to make up to his existing friends and social contacts that he comes from that sort of family. And if a poor relation appears, well it 'calls his bluff', as it were.

People are usually quite pleased when their rich uncle turns up, but if it's the poor distant second cousin or something like that, they are not so pleased. Or if the family black sheep turns up, or the family drunk, or someone who has just come out of jail, well, they are not so pleased to see them then. Not if you are a respectable citizen. (Pause.)

___: It's another sort of selfish thing, isn't it?

S: Yes. In India traditionally and this is - I have spoken about the Indians being not very mindful of truthfulness, but they have on the other hand some very good qualities. They are very generous in sharing. And there are many orthodox Hindus who regard it as a sin to eat without sharing their food with somebody or other. And there are some people, I mention this I think in my Memoirs, before sitting down to eat, they will go and look out for a beggar if no one has called at the door - they will go and look out for someone who needs some food and give something before sitting down to their own meal. And this is a quite common practice for many orthodox Hindus - that you shouldn't eat alone, it's a sin to eat alone. It is a very deeply felt conviction in India - it's one of the worst of sins for the ordinary person - to eat alone. And it is said for instance in the orthodox Hindu Shastras, that one of the reasons for being a householder and working, and earning money is so that you can feed guests, and brahmins and shramanas. That's one of the justifications of your existence. You work and you earn so that you can feed guests and holy men. Not wife and family - guests and holy men. Wife and family is, as it were, incidental, because they are part of yourself, as it were, extensions of yourself. There is a Zen proverb 'A day of no working is a day of no eating'. But the Hindu would say 'A day of no giving is a day of no eating.' You should not eat on the day you don't share your food with others. This is deeply felt by many Hindus. Many of them would feel quite bad about sitting down to a meal, having not given anything to anybody. If nobody turns up at least they may give something to a dog, or the crows, or some other living being. But preferably a human being, and preferably if they can get hold of one, a sadhu - a holy man.

"Tis truly so we know, tell us the eighth.'

'When man on woman dotes, on drink and dice alike,
And all his savings wastes, a source of suffering that.'

Now the Buddha is striking here a somewhat more humorous note.

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When a man wastes his money, on women, presumably immoral women, on drink and on gambling. The three great vices of ancient Indian social life. Loose women, drink and gambling. So this is quite clearly and obviously a source of deterioration in every respect, especially financial. (Long pause.)

Any comment on that or is it only too obvious?

"Tis truly so we know, tell us the ninth.'

'Who not content with his is seen with others wives,
Is seen with harlots too, a source of suffering that!'

This is of course obviously from the man's point of view. I wonder what the word for 'content' here is? (Pause for reference.) 'Asuntuttho' - not content. You remember that as a positive counterpart to the five, as it were, negative silas, precepts, there are five positive ones, the 'panca dhammas', do you remember that? So, what is the positive counterpart of 'Kamesu micchachara'?

Voices: Contentment.

S: Contentment, yes. So, here we find the Buddha saying 'Who not content with his, is seen with others' wives.' So what is the particular unskilful state do you think the Buddha is getting at here, which constitutes a source of downfall? What is this not being content with one's own wife, what does it signify? Why should one, well may be it's not much use asking the ladies this, but, why should one not be contented with one's own wife? Assuming she is a decent wife that does her duty as it were, if that's not an old fashioned way of speaking! Why should you not be content, satisfied with her?

Dhammadinna: You've got craving!

S: You've got craving, yes.

Dhammadinna: (?) something a bit more exciting perhaps.

S: Yes quite.

S: 'is seen with others' wives, is seen with harlots too.' It does suggest a sort of neurotic craving. Presumably you've chosen that particular woman to be your wife. So you are not satisfied with her, you don't stick with her, you are running after other men's wives, after harlots, well why is that? It's a sort of neurotic thing. What are you trying to prove? If your wife turns out to be a bad wife, if she doesn't do her duty, or she is bad tempered, or she is a nagger, well that's another matter, but it seems to be assumed that she is an ordinary decent sort of wife. Why aren't you content with her? It's a neurotic thing. No doubt that he is generalizing a bit, but on the whole it probably does hold good. Now have you ever thought about it in this sort of way? Fidelity in this sense as a sign of, as it were, mental health. Obviously it's not a question of, just of, attachment and not being able to break away from your wife, but of being contented with what you've got.

Marichi: It's a sort of 'pickled' state of mind - can't settle.

S: Yes. If you've made a mistake in choosing that particular woman, that's another matter. But let's assume you haven't made a mistake; she is quite decent average woman, she is a faithful wife, does her duty. Well why aren't you content, why aren't you satisfied, why are [249] you unfaithful? It can't be due to any positive mental state, or any skilful mental state. There must be some neurotic element in that, some neurotic reason for your instability.

Dhammadinna: What they call the seven year itch - in some cases:

___: I've heard of the three year itch, the 4 year itch, the five year itch! (Laughter.)

S: Some people have the honeymoon itch! (Laughter.)

But to look at it in a common sense sort of way, if you do get married, well you might as well in a sense, stay that way, unless there is some good spiritual reason later on for doing otherwise. But if it is just a sort of discontent, or neurotic dissatisfaction with your married partner and you just go off consorting with other men's wives, and with prostitutes, well that certainly isn't very positive and it contributes to downfall and decline.

Dhammadinna: It's fashionable these days to be unfaithful.

S: It's amusing.

___: I know it's quite an unfashionable idea.

S: If anyone disagrees with what the Buddha says, or with what I say well, please do make your thoughts known.

___: It depends what we are talking about in terms of 'wives', does not it?

S: What do you mean?

___: Well are we talking about legally bound men and wife or common-law situations?

S: No, Buddhism doesn't recognize any distinction between the common-law wife and the legal wife. Buddhists are quite unable to understand this distinction. The buddhist view is, if you are living with her, she is your wife.

___: And presumably this is aimed at the person who is a layman or a man of the world, a worldly man.

S: Right, yes. Who has sort of definitely pledged himself to one woman, and who is unable to keep to his word as it were. So if you don't wish to get married, if you don't intend pledging your word in that way, don't do so. If you want to have a sort of multiplicity of mistresses or whatever, well don't get married. But it's having sort of pledged your faith and having arrived at that sort of understanding with a particular woman whether common-law wife, or legal-wedded wife and so on, well just be content with that. Any straying from that probably has a neurotic motivation. And if you decide to end it because you want to become a monk or something like that, that's quite a different matter.

Siddhiratna: Do you think sexual tastes come into this at all?

S: There is that, you could say that. But presumably the Buddha assumes a normal female and a normal male, normal husband, a normal wife who don't have any particularly exotic sexual tastes, who are just satisfied with 'plain fare' as it were! (Laughter.)

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___: Is the layman to be condemned if he has neurotic tastes? If he is into eroticism or whatever?

S: Why does one get into eroticism? Or what does it mean to be 'into eroticism'?

Siddhiratna: It has struck me once or twice that sex is very boring (laughter)! Well, it needn't be boring if one gets into eroticism as it were.

___: I thought it was getting into the other... ?

S: No, I think if you find the basic - to be quite blunt - if you find the basic sexual activity boring, for non-spiritual reasons, you are probably a bit neurotic.

___: Non-spiritual reasons?

S: In a sense you don't enjoy, you don't find it satisfying for non-spiritual reasons, you want a sort of bit of a change, that probably is a bit neurotic. I don't want to put too fine a point upon it, or too blunt a point upon it, but that would seem, just like the question of food. If you've got a healthy straightforward appetite, well more or less any kind of food will satisfy you and make you happy. But if you become all finicky and you like very special things, and out of season things, and very special kind of cooking, well may be you are becoming a gourmet, but, surely that's a bit neurotic too. You become that way when you lose your basic healthy appetite. So I think it's more or less the same in the case of sex. If you lose your basic healthy sort of appetite you just become sort of finicky and want sort of extra seasoning and all that kind of thing.

___: Expect too much from them.

S: May be expect too much. Yes. (Pause.) May be what you are looking for is not to be found in that sphere at all. It may be when a man is unfaithful to his wife, it's because he is looking for something, from his wife or from sex, that he only get from within himself. So he thinks 'well she is not giving it to me; may be some other woman can.' But no woman can. He has got to find it within himself. So what is the point in straying away from his own wife? - don't expect from other people and from these sort of situations, more than they can intrinsically give you. So, what the Buddha has in mind here is a sort of Don Juanism and, Don Juanism is neurotic. Unless, you know, you are still quite young, and got plenty of health and vigour and energy; I am talking more about men here I am afraid, well it can be relatively healthy at that stage. But once you are married which means you have decided to as it were settle down and be faithful, well it seems rather a pity if you can't be content. (Pause.)

Then the devi says:

'Tis truly so we know, tell us the tenth!'

So the Buddha seems to be developing this theme a bit, may be with a touch of humour.

'When man who has past youth doth wed a maid with rounded breasts
Nor sleeps for jealousy - a source of suffering that.'

A source of downfall that. So what sort of situation do you think he has in mind? Why should an old man marry a young girl? Why? Why do - well it's no use asking all of you! (Laughter.) Why do elderly (people) do these foolish things?

___: (?) to catch after losing their passing youth.

S: Right. So, very often, I mean, some are exceptions surely. But very often it no doubt means that the old man, or the elderly man is not really facing up to the fact that he is old. And he wants to marry a young girl to re-create the illusion of youth for himself. May be, if he is well to do and the girl is a bit swept off her feet and all that sort of thing, well may be they do get married. But then, how does he feel? I mean he knows that in his heart of hearts he is old, and may be there is quite a number of young men in their social circle, and he can't help wondering 'well, she has married me, I am old, she is young, well who knows?', and he starts keeping a very suspicious jealous eye on the young men who are around, suspecting and imagining all sorts of things so much that he can't even sleep! So this is really a source of downfall.

Siddhiratna: Do you mean - it sounds a bit like the Decameron or something like that.

S: Sounds like?

Siddhiratna: Decameron.

S: Yes it does indeed! Though there are several amusing stories in the Jataka book about aged brahmins who marry young girls. The young girls get up to all sorts of mischief naturally.

Marichi: It also seems to be a sign of immaturity in that you are not facing, not merely that your youth is passing, but that's irrelevant to you (?) should be of a different sort really.

S: Yes, right. You ought to be making your way to the forest to live as a hermit but here you are marrying a girl old enough to be your grand-daughter. I mean, this is not to say there are not exceptions, it sometimes may well happen that they have a lot in common despite the difference of age, it's a quite healthy normal relationship, and no jealousy or possessiveness at all. That is possible sometimes. But I think the generality of cases would be rather different. And this was very much so in the old days when wealthy men, elderly men, tended for some reason or other, may be for reasons of social or sexual prestige, tended to marry very young girls, or take very young girls as secondary or tertiary wives. (Pause.) So in a way, it's a sort of not accepting yourself as you are, not recognizing where you are now. But it's not appropriate for an old man to be looking for a young wife. In a way, it's quite disgraceful. It reminds me of the celebrated story about Madame Blavatsky when she was in India. She was introduced to a very venerable old gentleman with a long white beard and long white hair. He was a brahmin, he had a stick, he was tottering along, he was so venerable and saintly looking. So she was introduced to him, and after a while a very beautiful young girl came into the room, and Madame Blavatsky said 'Oh is this your little grand-daughter?' and he said 'no, it's my little wife!' And she was so shocked she shrieked at him: 'you old beast!' (Laughter.) We are not told what happened after that. (Laughter.) He was very well known, a very highly respected gentleman.

All right, the devi says:

"Tis truly so we know, tell us the eleventh.'

'When woman or when man, a spendthrift or a sot,

Is placed in sovereign power, a source of suffering that.'

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What sort of general principle is involved here do you think?

___: Power?

S: Yes.

___: (In) some political situations, different clan perhaps.

S: Any sort of situation like that, but what is the principle involved? Why is this so wrong?

___: Well because if you have someone like that in power, then it's one of these down spiral that takes everybody with them.

S: Right. It's a sort of reversal of the natural order of things. If there is a sort of position of power or authority, surely it should be occupied by the person who is in a position to occupy it in a positive manner - for the good of everybody. But a sort, which means a drunkard or a spendthrift, and a waster is not the person to put in a position of authority, whether it's as a king or queen or just as a the leader of some small group. That the person who is as it were, leading should be a real leader, a genuine leader, not just someone artificially put in a position of authority, and exercising power. This is what power means.

I've never discussed this but I have thought about it quite a bit. Power, in this rather negative sense, means something quite artificial exercised by someone by mere virtue of the position, not by virtue of their intrinsic individuality - do you see what I mean?

___: I think you have talked about this before.

S: Have I?

___: In relation to Tibetan hierarchy.

S: Mm' may be.

___: And some people coming out of Tibet could ...

S: That's true, that's very true, yes.

___: That's because they weren't supported by the whole power thing, and couldn't operate with other people in a real, genuinely...

S: Yes, right. So personal influence as distinct from power due to position, yes. So that the person in the position as it were, of power, should be the person with individual influence. Influence in the sense of force of personality, individuality. I mean for instance when you get some monstrous kings. I was reading a bit about, the early 'Georges'. I was reading the life of Handel recently, and George the First, and George the Second. I mean, everybody despised them. They were the Kings, Kings of England. There they were strutting around in their garter

and their ribbons and all that sort of thing. Everybody bowing to them. But no one respected them. People despised them in fact. But, they were the king, George the First and George the Second.

Marichi: That often leads to a lot of corruption because you have to keep bypassing that power.

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S: Right. And that person, though so unsuitable, has power, can do things. So when you get a person in that sort of position who is not suited to that position and is exercising power by virtue of his position and not by virtue of his individuality this is a source of corruption, of downfall in every way. Like when a young playboy is installed, as guru maharaj - the perfect master. A good example! Downfall, for himself and his followers. Or when you've got the Borgia popes. Well you get it in government all the time.

___: In terms of ecclesiastical hierarchy you could have, not necessarily bad people, but just ordinary people, in high positions.

S: Just ordinary people, yes. Right, oh, they don't have to be bad, if they are mediocre they do enough harm. (Pause.) That applies even on a very small scale, even if you have a little committee, and that the person who is supposed to be in charge of the committee isn't really able to run it, well, it doesn't function.

"Tis truly so we know, the eleventh suffering.
Now tell us sir the twelfth, the source of suffering.

'When born of noble clan, a man is poor and craves
For much and longs to rule, a source of suffering that.'

S: What do you think the Buddha is talking about here?

___: It's not really ambition is it?

S: It is ambition, it is political ambition, political aggression and aggrandizement.

___: If he is born of noble clan how can he be poor?

S: Well he may be the younger son.

___: Mm! Yes, or the black sheep or something!

S: Yes. I mean, the fact that he is born of a noble clan gives him a certain ambitiousness. He takes it for granted he should have a prominent position in society, but he is poor. So, he embarks upon a career of expansion and conquest. So one can apply this at various levels.

___: Ambition isn't a bad thing, is it really?

S: Well, there, there is no word for ambition here, we've just used that word. We are using it in the negative sense. But there can be a positive ambition, one can give the word ambition a

positive meaning, but it won't work itself out in conquering other people and other lands.

___: This is a craving, isn't it?

S: Because perhaps of the inner emptiness, the personal poverty as it were.

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So then the Buddha concludes:

'These sufferings in the world the wise discern,
And blessed with vision Aryan,
They seek the world of bliss.'

In other words, having seen these sources of downfall, they direct their efforts to what is positive, and happy. The word for bliss is 'sivan', which is the same as the god 'Shiva'. (Transcriber's note: there is no 'h' in the Pali text.) It means not only what is blissful, but also what is auspicious, good, positive. What sort of general impression do you get from this series of verses?

___: It does feel quite like the Mangala Sutta.

S: In reverse!

___: Yes!

S: The Mangala Sutta in reverse, yes.

___: That sort of level.

S: Very practical, down to earth.

___: Who would it have been recited to? Is it a sort of, the laity or lay people?

S: It seems to apply more to the laity doesn't it than to the monks as it were.

___: They are very sort of, not exactly obvious but straight forward do's and don'ts.

S: Well, the Mangala Sutta in a way, is directed more to the laity isn't it?

Siddhiratna: I've forgotten which the Mangala Sutta was ...

S: The Mangala Sutta is the one where 'tell us the most auspicious sign of all' or 'tell us the greatest blessing.' And the Buddha says 'Not to associate with fools, but to associate with the wise. The worship of those deserving worship, that is the greatest blessing.

: We haven't done it yet Siddhi.

S: We haven't done it here, no. It's in another work. One certainly gets the impression of down-to-earthness. A direct address to people living in the world: pointing out very clearly

and simply what are the sort of things that contribute to people's deterioration, and downfall, ruin, disaster, from an ethical and spiritual point of view.

: Is there any particular significance do you think in the fact there is a conversation with a devi?

S: I wondered about that.

: The Mangala Sutta is also, isn't it?

S: 'Deva' in the Mangala Sutta. Many suttas are according to the tradition addressed to devas or devis, I mean the Buddhist would say 'well it just happened to be a devi who asked the Buddha these questions!' [255] It's as simple as that. May be there is no mystery or particular meaning in it at all. (Pause.) Some of you seem a bit tired and have probably had a long day. I think it might be a good idea if we have a quiet cup of tea, and then finish a little early, what do you say to that? And you can all go to bed. Someone put the kettle on.

___:

S: Well there is no reason why we shouldn't continue next time I come down.

___: Let's make a date now! (Laughter.)

S: No! (Laughter.) If you say things like that I'll go off to Formenterra and do them with Devaraja (Laughter.)

Dhammadinna: We will have to get you your own private jet-plane.

S: No. I think some of these verses he might not like so much! But you can see the strange way in which some of the words are translated. It says 'Of Suffering', suffering from 'Parabhava'. It's quite misleading. Anyone who just had a cursory acquaintance of Buddhist texts and translations, would think it was about 'dukkha', but it isn't. It's about 'downfall', the opposite of progress, the opposite of individual development.

___: It sounds as if it has been translated by a bit of a puritan.

S: In a way.

___: Translating it as 'suffering'.

Marichi: It's suffering seen from the outside, isn't it, by instances of downfall.

Lokamitra: How are you going on with your translation of the Dhammapada?

S: I am not going on at all I am afraid, but when I do get some time I am going to, well if there is something I could do, if I went to Formenterra. If I spent a whole month, just on that, I could finish it quite easily, quite comfortably.

___: What about all the other things then?

S: Well, that's it. But it will get done in due course, all being well. If I don't fall under the proverbial bus or something like that, it will all get done.

Marichi: Are you going to Formenterra or is this just a sort of carrot to get you to do the Dhammapada?

S: Well Devaraja has fallen in love with Formenterra and he wants to take all his friends there. So he has been urging me to go and he has been trying to persuade Chintamani to go and I told him that I might be tempted if I had some work which I could take with me for a month and do it there. Possibly I could do the Dhammapada there. I'd quite like the warm climate. But I couldn't go before the Winter time. They want to have some study retreats in the Autumn.

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Lokamitra: What are you going to study, have you any idea?

S: I don't really know. There are many possibilities. We will just see. I think we talk a lot about the Higher Evolution, and quite rightly so, but I think we don't perhaps very often consider the opposite possibility - that is to say the 'downfall'. Perhaps we should be a bit more mindful of that possibility - that you can fall back. If you haven't passed the point of no-return, you can fall right back and right down. But if you are in regular contact with a spiritual community it's highly unlikely because your friends will just hang on to you; they won't let you fall any further. But if you are not in contact with a spiritual community, if you are left to your own resources you could, you can fall right back and right down.

Lokamitra: If you have become alienated from the spiritual community, it's quite difficult for members of that community to get through or...

S: Indeed, yes.

Lokamitra: I mean, as we've seen in recent past with several resignations.

S: Yes, quite.

: Contact implies that you are not an alienated person, to be in contact.

Lokamitra: I don't know, contact - it seems to...

S: But usually, even the most alienated person has some order member or other in whom he or she confides a bit more than in others, and it's up to that particular person to do what he or she can.

: So it's important to have friends.

S: Important to have friends, yes. But especially as the order gets bigger, much as one may wish to do so, one can't be equally friends in the full practical concrete sense with everybody. You will have your own little circle, without being cliquish or anything like that. That circle may even change from time to time as people come and go. But you can't remain on, as I said, practical concrete terms of close friendship with more than a certain number of people. I

mean in your meditation, in your metta you wish well to all. You can even quite genuinely feel very, very much at one with all, but you can't usually translate that into terms of practice if there is more than a certain number of people involved. There are limitations of time if nothing else.

Lokamitra: You relate to some just on a (easier, automatically)

S: Yes. Again one shouldn't necessarily follow the line of least resistance and just associate with people you happen to like and tend to avoid others, even though they may be nearer at hand just because they are not your sort or something like that sort. The basic fact that they also have gone for refuge means there is something very, very deeply in common. You should be able to relate via that common factor. However unpromising they may seem, or however different their type may be from yours, or their interest may be from yours. Sometimes it does happen that you relate very well to very different people, but sometimes not. But in any case you can't concretely relate and regularly relate to more than a certain number. May be ten or twelve is [257] the limit, even four or five sometimes. Say four or five really good friends, well you've got a lot. (Pause)

But if circumstances just happen to put you into contact with certain order members, it should be possible to include them in your closer circle. (pause.)

Lokamitra: It is quite important to have that very close friendship within the Order, because otherwise even though in the Order one has a lot of contact one can at times be undernourished.

S: You can know lots of people but have no friends.

Lokamitra: You can even be getting on quite well with people but still not get a necessary nourishment.

S: Yes, that's true.

Siddhiratna: What do you think the nature of necessary nourishment is? I am not quite sure, I know that I do get it from certain people.

Lokamitra: That sort of sparking off thing.

S: It's a more spontaneous type of relationship about nothing in particular that you can relate with them and to them, even though there is nothing to discuss, there is no council business to discuss, or no meditation problem to discuss. But you just find yourself with them and you are so happy and have a spontaneous relationship.

Lokamitra: I find with me is, it tends to be people I've known for some time, may be have been through things with, or not, so emotionally they are reliable in that I (?)

S: I think other factors being equal your best friends are your old friends. I mean you do definitely build up over the years I am sure of this.

___: There is a knowledge of each other as well, an ease with each other.

S: Someone was telling me, I forget who it was, but, a little while ago, not so long ago, I think it was Ananda, quite sort of by chance, as it were, a number of people who had been at Aryatara in the old days just happened to be reunited there. And they have a very strong feeling for one another, even though they had not been living together for quite a few years now. (There) was Ananda and Malini and who else?

___: Gotami?

S: I am not sure whether Gotami was there. It was four or five of them. I think Dharmapala happened to be there.

___: (Inaudible)

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S: And they felt so close, even though they had not been living under the same roof for several years. And they felt very much at ease with one another, and very much in harmony. (Pause.) I think this is also important why the working team should not be disturbed too often. You need to be working with people for a sufficient length of time to get to know them really well in that particular way; say for instance two years is a good time. If you work with somebody regularly over a period of two years well, you can say you know that person quite well then. And even if you separate after that, and go your own ways, when you do meet up again, you can as it were, carry on from where you left off. (Pause.)

(Transcriber's note: I have not transcribed a few lines which have to do with domestic matters and cats!)

S: What is happening over the weekend here?

___: Just our usual class on Sunday evening.

___: I thought I'd organize a metta bhavana at the time of the private ordination.

S: That's very good. Yes. That will be, let me think, let me give you the time. It will be starting seven-o'clock to-morrow evening, and then the public ordination at twelve o'clock.

___: (Inaudible.)

S: There will be three being ordained, so the whole thing should go on from seven until nine I guess. The metta bhavana starting at seven (inaudible) (and at) eight o'clock or just over eight o'clock, and then after that there will be winding up with the meditation and puja. I take it everybody knows that it's Richard (Hooson) and Graham Carter and Colin Ferguson. And Colin has moved into Sukhavati and he is away on retreat at the moment. When he comes back he will be a permanent as it were member of Sukhavati, carrying on the work on the image with Chintamani.

___: There will be quite a large Order community there then won't there be?

S: Yes, quite large. Especially when Ratnapani and Vajrakumara come down, which they will I think, on Monday.

(Transcriber's note; chit-chat about Sukhavati not transcribed here as it is just domestic chit-chat!)

S: I saw by the way, this afternoon the clay model of the image that Greta has done for the West London Centre. It's very, very beautiful and I was very pleased with it, very suitable I think. I don't know what others make of it, but I certainly like it very much.

It's a Shakyamuni in meditation posture. It's rather solid and simple with nice clear clean lines. But the face is very beautiful, very meditative feeling to it. It's done with great sensitivity. At the same time it's quite solid, if you know ...

: It's not wishy-washy?

S: Not in the least wishy-washy, no.

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: It's not heavy either.

S: It's not heavy, and it's done in an interesting sort of way technically. It will be cast, but I think it will be very successful. It's a good size too. A very successful image I think. And Greta herself always keeps one copy, for her own collection as it were. She has got some really beautiful work.

___: She is a good sculptress.

S: I think she really is good, yes. She is really, you know, a professional.

___: What was your impression of her generally?

S: Very positive, very good warm feelings. Very free and open feelings.

I would say, probably it's the best image so far made within the Movement as it were. I'd go so far as to say that. It's very good work. It is also quite a youthful Buddha especially if you look at the figure from the side. It's a very young Buddha, and the features are not oriental. At the same time it's not, as it were, too obviously 'Western'. You don't think of that: it does not strike you as Eastern, at the same time you don't think 'ah there is a Western-type Buddha.'

(End of tape is chit-chat; not transcribed here about the Image.)

END OF SEMINAR

[Spellchecked and put into house style, Shantavira August 2000]