

## General Introduction to Sangharakshita's Seminars

### Hidden Treasure

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## DISCLAIMER

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

## **MEN'S STUDY GROUP LEADERS' RETREAT:**

### **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON**

### **'ASPECTS OF BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY'**

Padmaloka, 1 - 8.9.86

Present: Sarvamitra, Tejananda, Susiddhi, Virananda, Saddhaloka, Dharmapriya, Tejamitra, Kuladeva, Ruchiraketu, Kulamitra, Suvajra, Ratnaguna, Abhaya, Surata, Dhammaloka, Mahamati, Prakasha, Satyaraia, Dharmadhara (recorder)

#### **DAY ONE**

Abhaya: Well, Bhante, we've got 18 questions on this first lecture, 'Analytical Psychology of the Abhidharma', and the first question is from Tejananda, on areas of knowledge outside of religion in ancient India.

Tejananda: This is about the general introduction to the series at the beginning of the lecture, where you speak of the Western tendency to see Buddhism in terms of the isolation of aspects from the whole: hence Buddhist

psychology, Buddhist epistemology, Buddhist art and so on. This led our group on to a discussion of when and how this tendency developed in the West. and also whether there was any such tendency in ancient India.

For instance: Were there any developments towards areas of knowledge outside of the sphere of religious life in the broadest sense, in ancient India?

Sangharakshita: By 'ancient India' presumably one means pre-Buddhist India?

Tejananda: Pre-Buddhist or contemporary with Buddhism.

S: Let's deal with pre-Buddhist India first. That will be simpler and more straightforward. Pre-Buddhist India is, of course, one might say, Vedic India, and the centre of religious studies was, of course, the Vedas - the four Vedas or, actually, originally, the three Vedas. But there were also various sciences which were considered to be ancillary to the Vedas. For instance, there was grammar, there was phonetics, there was prosody, there was etymology; you might even say geometry, mathematics. A modern Indian scholar has written a quite important book on Vedic mathematics. So there were all these various branches of knowledge which were related, in one way or another, to the Vedas. It is quite clear that, in order to understand the meaning of the words of the Vedas, you needed to have some knowledge of etymology, grammar, and so on. In order to be able to pronounce the words of the Vedas properly, you needed to have a knowledge of phonetics. And

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in order to be able to construct the various altars for sacrifices which were conducted to the accompaniment of Vedic mantras, you needed to have some knowledge of arithmetic and even mathematics, as well as geometry. So one sees that around the Vedas there sprang up all these subsidiary studies. But, of course, as they got more specialised as time went on, they tended to become a bit detached from their moorings, as it were, in the Vedas. The connection was never entirely lost, by any means; but if you specialise in any subject you tend to lose sight of its connections with other subjects, or even with the big subject from which it originally sprang, or of which it was originally a branch. So one can say that, in the pre-Vedic period, brahminical knowledge, at least, brahminical scholarship, brahminical studies, were very much organised around the Vedas; but perhaps, as time went on and as the different ancillary subjects became more intensively studied, the connections with the Vedas became looser.

We can see much the same sort of thing happening in the case of Buddhism in traditional Buddhist countries. You can see it in Tibet. Art, for instance, is thoroughly integrated with religion. It meets the requirements of religion. It provides for or helps in the practice of religion - even dance; dance is integrated in the form of the lama dances. And, in much the same way as grammar and prosody are required for the elucidation of the Vedas, so they are required for the elucidation of the Buddhist Scriptures.

So you find this sort of pattern, one might say, in all traditional civilisations. But in modern times in the West, that is progressively in the course of the last 500 years, all the different arts and sciences have lost their moorings, one might say, in religion. They have become increasingly independent - in fact in modern time completely independent - of religion. This is especially, of course, the case with science, to use that rather abstract term, which goes its own way regardless of any ethical or religious considerations. This is one of the great problems of our time, that we have no body of, as it were, unified knowledge. I don't mean unified in the scientific sense, but organically unified. It is well known that the arts are quite independent of any unifying principle.

It is therefore interesting to find that there are at least some people who feel that once again all the different branches of the arts, for instance, need to re-establish their ancient religious connections. But usually this is sought to be done in a rather backward-looking way. I am not so sure that we can do it in that way. For instance, some of you may have seen the magazine *TerEnos*. This is especially interested in exploring and hope  
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fully reviving the spiritual connections of all the arts: the visual arts of various kinds - painting, architecture, sculpture, as well as music and, of course, poetry and literature generally. So that magazine represents a quite interesting development in this respect. So far there has not been much room for Buddhism. Buddhism is usually the odd religion out, as it were. But of course it certainly isn't going to be easy to unify all knowledge around spiritual principles again, because knowledge has become very, very diverse. Many fields are covered which weren't even thought about

before.

Perhaps, on the other hand, one ought to be aware of the fact that, in former times,

perhaps, people - some people at least - did know things that aren't generally known today, that they weren't complete fools, so to speak.

But to go back to Buddhism; even in the case of Buddhism, we see, for instance, logic getting a little out of hand. Logic was originally studied,

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it would seem, more by members of the Yogacara or Jñānāśāstra school; but eventually logical studies got a bit detached from Buddhism. So it is not easy to see what we can do about this problem, which we undoubtedly have; but perhaps we can at least get the problem clearly into view - the fact that different branches of knowledge are pursued by their respective specialists without reference to any unifying principle. And that must make a tremendous difference, really, to our whole outlook on life. In other words, we don't any longer feel ourselves, intellectually and culturally speaking, to be inhabiting a cosmos of knowledge and experience, but something more like a chaos. And that is reflected in the arts, very often.

Is this the sort of thing you were thinking about, the sort of thing you were discussing?

Tejananda: Yes.

Ratnaguna: Bhante, you said a few minutes ago that some people have tried to bring a unifying principle to the arts and sciences but in a backward-looking way. What did you mean by that?

5: I was thinking of some of the contributors, say, to Ta7Enos, who seem to suggest that in former times the arts and sciences were unified around religion, whether around Christianity or around Islam - those are usually the two religions they are most concerned with - and that one has, as it were, to go back. They don't explicitly say that you have to unknow whatever you know now, but sometimes it seems a little bit like that, so it seems

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to me that they want to go back to a synthesis which perhaps was very good in principle but which isn't, in view of the vast diversity of modern knowledge, any longer sufficiently comprehensive. I may be misrepresenting them, but this is certainly the impression I get - that they are backward-looking in this particular way. It is as though we need a much more comprehensive synthesis even than was possible then.

But it is more than just a synthesis. It is probably not the right time to go into it, but it is as though there have been some untoward developments which we can't exactly undo, but which we have to find some means of dealing with. There are some developments which are analogous to the multiplication of cancer cells in the human body, one might say. You don't restore the body to health by integrating those cancer cells into a new state of health; you just have to get rid of them. So it would seem that some branches of our knowledge are like that: they are too unhealthy to be integrated. But is it going to be possible to get rid of them? This is the question that arises. To integrate them, in a way, is to abolish them. Supposing you integrate all our present-day knowledge of atomic physics, with all its practical implications and applications, into a body of spiritual knowledge or spiritual principles. Well, to integrate, in a sense, will be to abolish, because the moral imperatives of that spiritual-cum-intellectual

synthesis will require you not to apply that knowledge - in a sense, therefore, not to have that knowledge. You can't apply it and, at the same time, accept the ethical and spiritual principles which constitute the basis of the synthesis. But, as I said, how we are going to get around that one I really don't know. So at present we live in a state of sort of cultural fragmentation.

But it must have been very simple living in, say, medieval Europe or the medieval Middle East when it was completely Islamic, or in ancient India when it was traditionally Buddhist or traditionally Hindu, where you had a completely unified culture in which everything was referred to certain basic spiritual principles. It must have been a completely different experience to live within that sort of culture, and to be nurtured and nourished by it. We just don't have that experience. It is very difficult for us even to imagine what it is like to live in a culture of that sort. Perhaps we have to develop a little cultural enclave of our own, where, at least within that enclave, everything that we are involved in, everything that we do, is referred back to basic spiritual principles.

This is why - going off the track a bit, but perhaps not very much  
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I wonder about the different people in the Movement who, say, are getting into art. Devamitra expressed himself to be rather concerned about what he described as 'an outbreak of a rash of painting' among the women Mitras and Friends around one particular centre. He may be right or he may be wrong in that particular evaluation; but I think what is important is that, if one does get into painting, one should try to relate it to fundamental Buddhist spiritual principles. I don't think it is quite enough just to express your feelings. Do you see what I'm getting at? It is not enough just to use the art as a therapy, almost. The art has really got to be integrated with one's spiritual life, a support of that spiritual life and an expression of that spiritual life. But that is why I think it is good if people who do have artistic talents and gifts serve the interests of the Movement by creating images and paintings, thankas and so on. I am not so sure that just a little bit of contemporary-style art, though it may amuse one and keep one happy for an evening or two a week, has really got very much spiritual value or is really the sort of thing that we ought to be encouraging people to get involved in.

But anyway, that opens up all sorts of issues. Perhaps we should pass on to the next question.

Abhaya: The next question is from Surata on the origins of the Mahasariputra legend as origin of the Abhidharma.

Surata: Yes, Bhante, we noticed in our group the paradox between the Theravada Abhidhamma being largely devoid of a human element and of myth and legend, and yet there is this legend that it originated from the Buddha teaching in the Tushita heaven and also the fact that the texts themselves are written in gold and surrounded by an air of mystery. Could you comment?

S: The author quotes somewhere a text to the effect that the Abhidharma is, I think, 'a feast of delight for the wise'. Perhaps one has to bear in mind that much of the Abhidharma literature is not meant for reading, in the ordinary sense. It is a sort of a Dewey Dize, one might say, in

a way, to assist meditation, especially to assist in the development of Insight; because I have described the Abhidharma in terms of analytical psychology, the analytical psychology of the Abhidharma. Because, though there is an element of synthesis too, which must not be neglected, what perhaps immediately strikes one about the Abhidharma is how very analytical it is. But why is it analytical? It is analytical for a quite practical spiritual purpose: that is, to help one break down the idea of a permanent unchanging self into

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its constituent parts, or better still its constituent processes. So that, instead of thinking in terms of, say, atman or atta you think in terms of a whole congeries of processes made up of elements which are constantly changing. So the analyses of the Abhidharma are really meant - in principle, at least - as supports for that kind of analysis in the context of meditation. Maybe, later on, analysis was refined upon for its own sake, but that is another matter. So one must bear in mind that as you read through the so-called books of the Abhidharma, which are not meant for reading, which are meant as manuals, one might say, in most cases, for meditators, you won't feel the same interest and perhaps delight as the meditator might feel.

This ties up with something I said the other evening, referring to Swedenborg - do you remember that, those who were present? - that knowledge becomes wisdom only if you delight in it; and, of course, you delight only in that which you love. So to us the Abhidharma presents itself under the aspect of knowledge; there isn't that element of delight. But perhaps if you, so to speak, start loving the Abhidharma and delighting in it, you will experience it in a different way; but you can do that only or mainly through meditation, through actually utilising the analytical material contained in the Abhidharma as a support for the development of insight into the evanescent nature of the so-called personality. Do you catch the idea? (Voices assenting.)

So perhaps it isn't therefore surprising that the Abhidharma should have been said to have been preached originally by the Buddha to his mother in the Tushita - or satisfied or delighted - devaloka; also, perhaps, not surprising that the actual texts should be beautifully illuminated and so on.

On the other hand, of course, many Buddhists in Theravada Buddhist countries have got almost a blind respect for or blind faith in the Abhidharma and decorate the covers of Abhidharma books out of that devotion without any understanding of what the contents are. So, there, it is as though you've got knowledge with devotion superimposed upon it, instead of having the two as it were blended together into something more like Wisdom. But in the true sense one might say that these myths, if you like, and these particular practices, at least suggest or hint at the fact that the Abhidharma isn't really in principle anything purely intellectual. Though maybe in the Theravada countries of today, very often, it is studied just in that way, without reference to meditation and in a purely abstract, almost academic, way. Sometimes lay people in Burma, say, learn great lists of Abhidharma categories off by heart, and they can reel them off to you with a great deal of satis

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faction, but they don't actually reflect on them or meditate on them, or try to develop Insight on the basis of them.

For instance, those people who have studied the Buddhist psychology, which deals with the cetasas and caṭṭas, must have found that extremely interesting and even inspiring. Well, this is technically Abhidharma material, but of a - well, not exactly simple; it is somewhat basic, basic in the sense of fundamental. It represents in some ways one of the most important parts of that whole material. It is certainly useful and relevant and certainly not just dry and uninteresting.

Tejananda: Could you say something about the basis for the actual use of Abhidharma material as a source of Insight meditation?

S: I suppose, by way of illustration, one can go back to the six senses, the 12 dhatus and the 18 āyatanas. Do you see what I mean? Because you as it were say to yourself, 'Here is the eye, there is the visual object, and in dependence upon the conjunction of eye and visual object, there arises eye-consciousness. It is a process.' And you go through the rest of the senses and their respective objects and the respective consciousnesses that arise in that way, so in this way you break down your so-called self-experience into something which is complex, something which is plural and not singular. And you review this, you bear this in mind, you reflect upon it. That is the simplest form of such as it were analytical reflection. And Guenther translates *pañāna* as - what does he call it? analytical - (Voice: Appreciative discrimination.) Appreciative discrimination. It is analytical. *pañāna*, wisdom, certainly in the early days of Buddhism, or in the context of the Abhidharma, has this implication of an analysis, an analysis of existence, an analysis of experience into what the Abhidharma calls *dharmas*. So the division into senses and sense objects and sense-consciousnesses represents what one might call a rudimentary or even a primitive form of that type of analysis. It can become very complex, because in the Abhidharma you have the 24 *paccayas*, or relations. So you can apply these. You learn this list of 24 *paccayas* off by heart, and when you consider the relationship, say, between the eye and the visual object, you ask yourself; 'By way of what type of *paccaya* is it related?', because everything is not related to everything else in the same way; there are these 24 possibilities.

This is, by the way, distinctive to the Theravāda. The Sarvāstivāda stops at four *paccayas*.

Tejananda: So, basically, you can use the entire formulations of the Abhi  
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dharma in that way?

S: Yes, examining your mental state and analysing it in accordance with the categories of the Abhidharma, the categories as represented by the *dhammas*. This is the basic procedure. It is a sort of drill. It can become mechanical if one isn't careful, but as we have seen, I am sure, in the case of Mind in Buddhist psychology, it does have certain definite practical advantages and benefits. For instance, when you are looking at the mental events, the *cetasakas*, which are present in all states of skilful consciousness, it is very interesting what you find there. For instance, you find that faith is always present; faith is present in every single - no, single is not the word - positive mental state, every skilful mental state. That particular mental factor is



always there.

Ratnaguna: The 13 caṭasikas are present in every positive mental state. Are they quite literally present simultaneously in every positive, skilful mental state?

S: As far as I remember, that is the suggestion, yes. But, as I have said at other times, in similar connections, one really has just to look at one's own experience. If you think that you are in a genuinely skilful state, ask yourself what factors are present - because you should be able actually to identify them and as it were locate them. Not simply take it for granted after reading, say, Māndala Buddhist Psychology that they must be there; one should be able actually to see them, to see them at work, even. First of all, there are all those mental factors which are present in all states of consciousness whatsoever, and then those which are present in all skilful and those which are present in all unskilful mental states.

: And the ten which you mentioned in this connection; do they correspond mentally to the 11 positive mental events of the 11th Buddhist Psychology?

S: They differ a little. That is the subject matter of a further study to what extent the different Abhidharma traditions differ and why. Sometimes one can see the reason for the difference: perhaps the point of view is slightly different. There are certain mental events which are present in all positive states of consciousness, all skilful states, according to the different traditions; the lists are certainly not completely different. As far as I remember, the first six or seven are present according to all the different traditions; that is, mainly, the Theravāda, the Sarvāstivāda and the Yogācāra. For instance, everybody agrees that faith is present.

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Abhaya: The next question is from Ratnaguna about the idea of dharmas being specifically Buddhist, or are they found in other Indian schools?

Ratnaguna: That expresses the question.

S: The term in this sense is not found in other (V) schools. The idea is certainly there; it actually represents a very strong trend in Indian thought from the very beginning. The Sāṃkhya school of philosophy or thought is essentially analytical, and so is the Vaiśeṣika. So when I say 'essentially analytical', what do I mean?

In the case of the Sāṃkhya school - Sāṃkhya, by the way, means literally, in a way, the school of enumeration; Sāṃkhya really means counting - the Sāṃkhya tradition divides the whole of existence into different categories; not quite in the same way as the Abhidharma but the general principle is the same. And the Vaiśeṣika school does likewise. There are many different subdivisions of the Sāṃkhya school, and they don't always give the same list, but as far as I remember there are about 22 different fundamental categories. You get even the same tendency in ancient Greece, with Democritus: you get the void and you get the atoms, everything is regarded as being composed ultimately of atoms. So there is this attempt in Indian thought generally, or this tendency with any one trend within it, to try to understand existence, or phenomena, by breaking them up into their constituent parts. And this is exactly what the Abhidharma tries to do.

There are, of course, all sorts of philosophical difficulties, especially if one takes the

analysis too literally; but some scholars have certainly seen a kind of continuity, almost, between the Samkhya and the Abhidharma. The Samkhya school is probably the most ancient school of Indian thought. Usually, when we think of Indian thought, Indian philosophy, we think of Vedanta and of the rather late, highly sophisticated metaphysical teachings of, say, Sankara, the Advaita Vedanta; but actually the Samkhya is a very ancient school.

Don't forget also, Jainism is pluralistic in a rather different way, perhaps in a cruder way, but in principle it too is pluralistic. So one could say, therefore, that in Indian thought generally, there are, very generally speaking, two major trends. There is a pluralistic trend which tends to be associated - though not invariably, perhaps - with the non-brahminical tradition; and there is the more monistic tradition which tends to be associated with the brahminical tradition. So included in the pluralistic schools of thought are the Samkhya, the Abhidharma in its various forms, the Jaina

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philosophy, and also the Vaisheshika school or the Jnaya(?) school, one could say.

So, in principle, one might say, the Abhidharma is not unique. Perhaps you could say that the uniqueness of the Abhidharma consists more in the thoroughgoing way in which it applies its analysis to the mind itself, or to our subjective psychological experience, so as to as it were exercise the notion of an unchanging self.

Ratnaguna: Did the Buddha use the term dhazma and dhaznes in much the same

way as it is used in the Abhidharma?

S: It would seem not; not in that technical way. Though there are passages, for instance, there is the opening verse of the Dhammapadam: Manu p

dhamma (?). There is a lot of discussion as to what is meant by

dhamma here. It probably means mental states, but in a very broad sense. But the term dhamma, or dhatu, in the full Abhidharma sense, does not appear to be used in the Sutta Pitaka or the Vinaya Pitaka. Historically speaking, it would seem to be, in its fully fledged form, definitely a later development, though the seeds of the Abhidharma are certainly to be found in perhaps the earliest Buddhist literature.

Ratnaguna: Do you think the Buddha would have been using the word as, say, the Jains or the Samkhyas would have used it?

S: They did not use the term dhatu in that sense, no. They had a terminology of their own. If you look into any textbook of Indian philosophy, just look up the chapter on the Samkhya school and you will at once see what I have been getting at: you will at once see that that is quite definitely analytical - not in the comprehensive way that the Abhidharma is, it doesn't go into such minute particulars, but it is broadly quite definitely an analytical system.

It is associated, by the way - a late founder is the sage Kapila; and of course

Kapilavastu is named after Kapila, you know, the Buddha was born where he lived. You might remember that Asvaghosa, in his *Buddhacarita* gives a quite detailed account of the Samkhya philosophy - not a very clear one and represents the Buddha as refuting it systematically. So that would suggest that there was some danger, perhaps, in Buddhism being confused with Samkhya philosophy at the time of Asvaghosa.

You could say, in the case of the Samkhya, the two basic principles are *putusa* and *prakriti*. You could say they correspond to the conditioned  
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and the Unconditioned; *putusa* corresponding to the Unconditioned and *prakriti* to the conditioned. And it is *prakriti* which is composite, being made up only to begin with of the three *gunas*, and everything else being made up of the three *gunas* in differing proportions; and the analysis starts from that.

The analysis is more cosmological than psychological, though, perhaps one could say; though it isn't exclusively cosmological. Buddhism's analysis tends to be predominantly, if not exclusively, psychological; though not quite exclusively, because there is the analysis of *tupa*. But *tupa* is not analysed nearly to the same extent as *vedana*, *sanjna*, *samvrtta* and *Ujjana*. So it is a predominantly psychological analysis.

One could also say, in the case of the Abhidharma, as in the case of

Buddhism generally, that even cosmological analysis is ultimately psychological inasmuch as spheres of existence are correlated with states of mind.

: Those terms *putusa* and *prakriti* are used in Buddhism, aren't

they? I've seen them.

5: *Sutusa* is in Pali *putusa*. In Buddhism *putusa* is not used in the sense that it is used in the Samkhya. *Putusa* in the Samkhya is a sort of ultimate metaphysical entity. But, strange to say, it is a matter of dispute within the Samkhya schools, as far as I remember, as to whether *putusa* represents a single unit or whether there is a plurality of *putusas*. It is as though you can read Samkhya in either way. *Prakriti* just means nature, and the word *prakriti* in Pali is *pakkati*(?). But it isn't, again, used in the Samkhya sense. For instance, you've got *pakkati sila*; that is *sila* which is natural as opposed to that *Si la* which is artificial so it is the same word, linguistically speaking, but it is used in a completely different sense. In Buddhism it is used in a non-technical sense. As far as I know, it is never used in the technical Samkhya sense.

Abhaya: We've still got 12 questions. The next question is from Prakasha, on the *dhatmas* being irreducible.

Prakasha: Is it actually stated in the Sarvastivadin and Theravadin Abhidharmas that *dhatmas* are ultimately real and irreducible. or is this just

how they are regarded as a matter of attitude?

S: To the best of my recollection - and I'll have to check my sources here the Sarvastivadins do go as far as that; but I rather think the Theravadins do not, though they often do with regard to attitude. But I think technically, if one examines the actual language of the Theravada Abhidharma,

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the Theravada tradition, they do not actually say that - that they are literally irreducible and ultimate. Though I have caught out some modern Theravadins using that sort of language; I refer to it somewhere. But, yes, as far as I recollect, the Sarvastivadins do actually speak in those sort of terms. So theirs is a more, one might say, literal, not to say literalistic, reading of what has been described as the dharma phenomenology.

But I suppose, in analysis, you have to stop somewhere; you have to be careful that you don't regard the point at which you stop as an actually existing point.

Prakasha: How correct is this charge of Hinayana literalism, then, as applied to the Theravada?

S: I think, in this particular respect, it is probably less justified, in principle, in the case of the Theravadins than in the case of the Sarvastivadins.

Abhaya: There is another question from Tejananda on the same subject, the irreducibility of dharmas.

Tejananda: Well, it's very closely related. It's simply that it seems rather extraordinary to me that the idea of the ultimate irreducibility

of dharmas should have arisen, given the implications of the anatta doctrine.

How could this have happened?

S: I suppose it's the gravitational pull operating at the intellectual level. One tends to forget that the categories that one uses have a basically instrumental value. One starts thinking that they are giving a true picture of Reality. I mean, how could one possibly ever think that, for instance, wearing the robe was an end in itself? But these things happen. It's as though the gravitational pull, as I've called it, is at work at all levels and therefore to be resisted at all levels. If you don't resist it, consciously and deliberately, you fall victim to it, because it is operating all the time. You mustn't think that when you are not actually making an effort to overcome it, it is not actually operating! It goes on operating all the time, whereas your effort to overcome it or counteract it is only occasional.

sional.

I think that this whole question of analysis really requires re-examination. To what extent is analysis actually valid? I mean, can you, in the real sense, analyse in the way that the

Abhidharma implies that you can? Is it really possible to divide one part of a thing from the other parts? Is there a real division, or is the division only notional? There is, in  
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a sense, a real division. For instance, you can divide, say, your nose from the rest of your face; but where does your nose end and the rest of your face begin? You see - is there an actual point? So is not the division of the nose from the face at least to some extent arbitrary? Is there a nose, as distinct from the face in the strict sense? Do you see what I mean?

Take another example: time. We divide time, say, into minutes. But is time really divided into minutes? If you divide things, there is always a problem of how to put them together again. But you can't help in a way dividing, for certain practical purposes, but it seems dangerous to take those divisions too literally, to treat them as actually corresponding to realities.

It is equally true to say that reality, in the ordinary sense of the term, is absolutely continuous. This was Bergson's point, wasn't it? that it is the mind that chops things up into bits; that reality itself, so to speak, does not consist of bits strung together. So, on the one hand, we are presented with a sort of reality that we can only describe as continuous, which we experience as continuous, but we mentally divide it into discrete parts. But it itself is not divided like that. At the very best, there are sort of lumps, where reality sort of coagulates, so that there are certain perceived differences; but not that one can clearly see where one part ends and another 'part' begins, so that the particular object under investigation literally consists of parts in the sense that, say, a motor car does. Does a tree consist of parts in the way that a motor car does? If you take a part of a motor car which is a natural part, the same applies to that, too. It doesn't actually consist of parts. Do you see what I'm getting at? So we operate with these concepts of continuity and being made up of parts, but both of them would seem to be concepts that we use for certain practical purposes, and perhaps we shouldn't take either of them too literally. We can't say that things are completely continuous, because

we do see, if not differences, at least sort of corrugations in reality. At the same time, we can't chop things up into bits literally, because then, as I said, we are faced by the problem of fitting the bits together. So, in some ways, if you look at it metaphysically, the Theravada Abhidharma itself isn't really a metaphysical system. If you insist on regarding it as a metaphysical system, all sorts of philosophical difficulties arise. And maybe that's what happened with the Sarvastivada.

When we analyse our own physical body into earth, water, fire and air, it doesn't mean that there are these four completely different, discontinuous  
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parts. We are reflecting in that way for a certain practical purpose.

Abhaya: Suvajra has a final question on the irreducibility of dhauras.

Suvajra: I was wondering what the position was of the other Hinayana schools with regard to dhauras. You mention in this lecture and in your Suzuev the

position of the Theravadins and the Sarvastivadins, but not the other schools.

S: In the case of the Sautrantikas, they didn't have any dhauras because they didn't have any Abhidharma. Oh - no, perhaps it is too sweeping to say they didn't have any dhauras; perhaps it would be more correct to say they had a different theory of dhauras. We don't know much about the other schools, really, do we? We have the Theravada Abhidharma, we have the Sarvastivada Abhidharma, mainly in the form of the FbhLdhaura-kosa; and we have the Yogachara Abhidharma that developed out of the Sarvastivada Abhidharma. But we don't have any other Abhidharma traditions, to the best of my recollection. But certainly in India itself, and even in other countries, it was the Sarvastivada that represented the dominant Abhidharma tradition; the Theravada Abhidharma tradition seems to have been confined to south India and to Sri Lanka.

Suvajra: So the other schools didn't have their own Abhidharmas? Or is it just that those haven't survived?

S: I think the other schools are said to have had Tripitakas, but I don't know that it is anywhere explicitly stated that they had their Abhidharmas. It certainly is explicitly stated that they had their own versions of the Vinaya Pitaka, but I don't recollect any statement to the effect that they had their own Abhidharma Pitakas. I remember reading somewhere - you'll have to check this - that there were some schools, or perhaps it was only one school, that considered that the term Abhidharma Pitaka referred to certain discourses in the Sutta ~taka.

Dharmapriya: What about the Dharmaguptas, because they are a living tradition inasmuch as they have given rise to the Mahayana in Vietnam?

S: Ah, but the Dharmaguptas are regarded as offshoots, one could say, of the Sarvastivada. There are the Mulasarvastivadins, there are the Dharmaguptas and so on; there is quite a range, perhaps five or six, offshoots or sub-schools. Usually one refers to the Dharmagupta in connection with a particular Vinaya.

Kuladeva: Inasmuch as the Sautrantikas are so called because they didn't recognise the Abhidharma as being canonical, doesn't that suggest that the  
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other schools did have an Abhidharma tradition?

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S: One could argue that by that time the Sarvastivadins were the dominant Hinayana school and therefore placed great emphasis on the Abhidharma, and that it was in contradistinction to them that the Sautrantikas described themselves as Sautrantikas. It seems that the Vaibhasikas were the school with which the Sautrantikas usually debated. They seem to have been quite close in that respect. But isn't it said that Vasubandhu composed his Abh~dharma-kosa at the request of the Vaibhasika school of the Sarvastivadins? the Vabhasa being the commentary on the inaptasthana. He composed that in accordance with the traditions of the Vaibhasikas, but then he was requested to write a commentary to elucidate the verses that he composed. But, by the time he came to compose that commentary, some Sautrantika ideas had crept in. He was thinking a little bit, at least, along Sautrantika lines. So it is said, therefore, that the commentary, unlike the verses, betrays traces of Sautrantika influence. Ana, of course, subsequently, according to tradition, he became a follower of the

Yogachara. That suggests there was a close debate going on between the Sarvastivadins and those who called themselves Sautrantikas, that is to say those who regarded the Abhidharma as the Word of the Buddha and those who did not.

Even in the case of the Sarvastivadins, they did not actually say that the Abhidharma Pitaka was the Word of the Buddha in quite the same way that the Theravadins did. Even the Theravadins did not, in a way, because it is noticeable that the books of the Abhidharma Pitaka do not begin with 'Ētban nB sutan' (?) and in the case of the Sarvastivadins the name of a

particular acatyā is attached to each of their seven Abhidharma books. In

the case of the Theravada, the name of an acatyā is attached only to one particular Abhidharma book, and that, of course, is the Ratha--atthu. But even so, the commentators explain that the Buddha himself laid down the maṅkās, that is to say the framework of discussion which was filled in by Moggalliputta Tissa at the time of the Third Council. So there is a little difference between the Theravadins and the Sarvastivadins here.

So though, in a sense, the Sarvastivadins in principle regard the Abhidharma Pitaka as the Word of the Buddha, their own tradition records the names of acatyās as the authors, or at least editors, of those books. None the less, they adhered very strongly to the Xbchings which had been carried out by their own school. Someone has suggested that the period of early Buddhism should be called 'the age of Abhidharma', because the Abhidharma, ntictutTly speaking, just dominated the scene.

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Abhaya: Prakasha now has a question on the process of sorting out with respect to your own teachings.

Prakasha: You say the Abhidharma performed three invaluable functions. First, it established the meaning of technical terms; secondly, it collated different discussions of particular topics; and, thirdly, it expounded the whole range of the teachings systematically.

S (breaking in): Didn't I mention that it systematised the spiritual path?

Prakasha: No. I think that comes in in The Ētetnal Legacy.

S: That also is maybe the practical side of the systematisation.

Prakasha (continuing): How important is it that we continue this process of systematisation with your presentation of the Dharma? Have you any cri

teria for doing this? How do we guard against the pitfalls?

S: Well, I think it is inevitable. I think in a way it is a natural stage of development. I have said different things on different occasions, sometimes in the form of lectures, sometimes in the form of seminars, and there might be minor inconsistencies that need to be ironed out. Also it may be that comments made on particular topics from different points of view need to

be brought together and underlying principles made clearer. I think this is a natural, even inevitable, process, especially where one doesn't perhaps reduce everything to writing oneself. One could say that there is very often a more creative, informal, unsystematic stage of presentation of a teaching, and then there is a more systematic, more formal, sometimes more concise, presentation of that same teaching. So I think this will happen. In certain respects, on certain topics, I have made a start myself with regard, for instance, to Going for Refuge. But there are other topics I have touched on, like, say, the Trikaya doctrine, where I have explained it in quite a number of different ways and from several different points of view. Some day all those statements will need to be brought together, clarified and systematised - but again, not too rigidly, let us hope!

But, yes, the Abhidharma did perform that very useful threefold function, and it is useful. So the Abhidharma does have its place, a quite important place, in the overall Buddhist tradition. You can't escape it. You can even say that the Tibetans and the Chinese developed their own Abhidharmas, in the sense that they tried to systematise the teachings that had come down to them; for instance, they <the Tibetans> tried to arrange the sutras themselves in a sort of progressive sequence, but that is an

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Abhidharma-type activity; whereas the Chinese, perhaps, being rather more historically minded than the Indians, did it in a sort of historical context rather than an abstract philosophical one. The Tibetans organised all the different schools of Buddhist thought, or even Indian thought, into a sort of progressive series, starting with, I think, the Snyaya(?) Vaisheshika school of Indian Hindu thought and going right up to the Madhyamika, or their particular school, the Prasangika school.

If you are presented with any vast mass of material, you need to systematise, you need to organise, you need to classify, if you are to comprehend it - to comprehend it intellectually, to use that word in a positive sense. Then some people derive a certain satisfaction from systematising things, from organising facts, organising different statements, reconciling one with another. One also needs to consider the nature of the audience addressed, because sometimes one can go more deeply into things with one kind of audience than one can with another, so it isn't enough to consider what is said or when it was said, but to whom it was said.

Abhaya: Mahamati also has a question on the classification of your teachings.

Mahamati: The question falls into two parts. The first part is whether

you think that the actual activity of classification and systematisation by the original Abhidharmists was - at least

initially - a useful spiritual activity for them, or whether

you think that the process of compiling was one reason for the degeneration of the Hinayana schools.

S: I have been thinking about this a little from time to time. Perhaps one thing that we don't always appreciate is that, for hundreds of years, there were no books; that, for hundreds of



years - at least, say, for 200 or 300 years - the Buddha's teachings were transmitted by oral means, and therefore that the bhikkhus had to devote an enormous amount of their time to learning things by heart; and if they hadn't done that it wouldn't have been possible to write down the Scriptures later on. But I think the fact that they decided to devote such an enormous amount of time to learning things by heart probably distorted their whole spiritual life and spiritual outlook. So, in the Buddha's day, we find, according to the Pali Canon, disciples, I mean bhikkhus, just learning a few verses by heart. That seems to have been sufficient. But later on bhikkhus were committing to memory tens of thousands of words, tens of thousands of verses. So this must have given a certain bent to their religious life, to their spiritual life, and

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I cannot see that that could have been very good for them. It would have thrown their spiritual life rather out of balance. Though, on the other hand, if they hadn't done that, we wouldn't perhaps have the Scriptures

now. So I think it was probably that - the fact that everything was transmitted orally - rather than the development of the Abhidharma tradition, that was responsible for the deformation that did take place. I think the Abhidharma tradition, inasmuch as that was transmitted orally too, represents only a special case of what happened.

But supposing all of you had to spend the greater part of your time just learning things by heart - for instance, that a MLtzata was recited to you and you had to learn it by heart. You wouldn't have time for much else. You can imagine the sort of direction it would give to your whole spiritual life if you just didn't see a book or have the opportunity of reading a book; if everything had to be learned by heart, and you were very concerned to yet others to learn by heart and to refresh your own memory, you were very afraid of forgetting, constantly reciting and wanting to transmit to the next generation of monks so that it shouldn't be lost. You would perhaps be so busy learning by heart and reciting it, that you wouldn't have much time to think about it or to practise it. Perhaps you would be afraid to think about it in case you forgot the actual wording.

So I think, if any deformation was brought about in the spiritual life of the Hinayanists, to use that general term, it was more on account of this fact than on account of the fact that an Abhidharma tradition was developed.

Mahamati: The second part has to do with the use of computers. I think

it will be possible to create a computer database which could P P in nrinrinlo rnntsin .qsv. the texts of all your books and semi

nars and even, for example, the entire text of the three Pitakas. Then, once suitable classifications had been decided, it would be possible to call up all references on a particular subject or theme at the press of a button. The database could be kept, say, at Padmaloka, and there could be computer terminals all

over the world. Do you find this an exciting prospect?

S: Personally, I find it deeply depressing! You could do this. I wonder how well it would

bedone, because nothing would really be brought into organic connection with anything else but only, so to speak, into a mechanical relation. Do you see what I mean? For instance, they have done it with Shake

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spere; I don't know if you know about that. Shakespeare's imagery has been analysed with the help of a computer, and it has been found that certain images or groups of images predominate in certain plays, which is interesting because it helps you to understand or to see more clearly that the centre of a play, very often, is just a sort of constellation of images and the play grows out of that. These images lend their colour or their tone to the play as a whole. But that knowledge by itself is not really enough; you need to feel that. And there are some connections, perhaps, which are so subtle that no computer would be able to handle them. In any case, the computer would have to be programmed, so who would program it? The results would be determined by the nature of the programming, which would mean that the results would share the limitations of the programming. So, yes, it could be that you would come up with some interesting results, but i think you would have to take these results as something to reflect upon, or as guidelines or pointers for further personal investigations. I don't think you could allow them to take the place of personal investigation. Though I think there would always be that danger because of that gravitational pull. <You might think,> 'Oh,here we've got everything together, absolutely everything that is said in the Tipitaka and in all Bhante's seminars about faith.' But that is just the beginning , as it were. You have still got to consider that material, organise it, reflect upon it; and that material has in any case, each particular item on the subject of, say, faith, been taken out of its context. To understand it fully-you need to go back to the context and again relate it to the context.

So I think that one would have to be very careful to use the material produced by the computer in this way and not to allow it to use oneself, and not to think that the work was done when the computer had done it. I think I personally would prefer not to rely on a computer at all; I would rather just count with my hand up, or even rely on my memory to some extent!

Ratnaguna: Doyou think that is personal, Bhante, or do you think there is a very good objective reason for that?

S: I think it's partly personal, or even mainly personal. But I think< also there is an element ofgood healthy resistance to the mechanisation of life, so to speak; or <resistance to> excessive reliance on the alienated intellect or its mechanical counterparts and substitutes or extensions.

Mahamati: Being perhaps a bit prevecative, it may be true that this is something that is bound to happen, in the sense that

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S: It may well be so. I have been a bit surprised at the way this 'rash of art' has broken out around a particular certra What about the rash of word processors that has broken out under

my very nose here in the Order Office?! I can't go away for a weekend without coming back and finding another word processor comfortably installed. People really get fascinated by the things. I am not in the least fascinated. They leave me absolutely cold. But I can see that - people will be as it were playing with these things and enjoying them and using them, producing results and considering the results; as you said, it probably is psychologically inevitable. Perhaps I won't live to see it, but perhaps it is alihappening so fast that I'm afraid I might! I might be sitting here in five years' time and when I say, for instance, something about faith, the computer booms at me: 'But you said something different in such-and-such!' Anyway, we shall see. How are we going?

Abhaya: We've done 8 out of 17. The next question is from Dhammaloka on the classification of cLtta and cattastEa.

Dhammaloka: In the lecture after dealing with the classification of the

cittas according to the Theravada Abhidharma, you then go into the cattasikas according to the Sarvastivada approach. Why did you decide to proceed in this way? Is there particularly

much for us to learn by way of investigating the cittas of the Theravada and the caLtasLkas of the Sarvastivada?

S: No, it wasn't that at all. I remember the reason quite clearly, in

fact, I thought I had mentioned it, but maybe not. In the course of the lecture I couldn't give a complete account of Theravada cattas and cattasLkas and Sarvastivada cLttas and caitasLkas, so I thought why not deal with the Theravada cLttas and the Sarvastivada caLtasLkas? That would prevent me, so to speak, confining myself to one particular tradition. At that time, I was always very keen to counteract any tendency to over-identify with the Theravada, because lots of people had never heard of the Sarvastivada Abhidharma, or even of the Sarvastivada itself, so that was a way of reminding them of the existence of the Sarvastivada and of its importance, and giving them a sample of Sarvastivada teaching as well as of Theravada teaching in this respect. So my intentions there were definitely as it were peda

gogical.

Ratnasuna: Do cattas and cattasckas correspond to 'mind' and 'mental events' in Abhidharma Buddhist Psychology?

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S: Yes, they correspond to 'mind' and 'mental events'.

Ratnaguna: That's a bit complex, isn't it?

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S: In the Theravada - Pali - tradition, they speak of cattas. In Sanskrit and the Sarvastivada they speak of caLtasLkas.

Ratnaguna: I was quite interested in the lecture where admittedly you talk

about the Theravadins and the Sarvastivadins, but you mentioned, for instance, that in the first dhyana there are five cLttas - positive mental factors

S: There are five jhanangas(?). Ratnaguna: -Oh, are they not cLttas? - the five factors in first dhyana?

S: To the best of my recollection, they are cactasikas. I have mentioned several times fairly recently that when one is considering the dhyanas or jhanas from an analytical psychological point of view, you must not think that, say, in the first dhyana, there are only those five jhanangas. They are what are distinctive, so to speak, because you will have the other positive mental events, as well as those events which you find in all classes of consciousness anyway. So it is as though you have, say, a bottom stratum where those mental events are present, which are common to all mental states. Then, on top, a smaller number, those which are present in all skilful mental states. And then a smaller number still, those which constitute or which differentiate the particular dhyanas.

Ratnaguna: You may have gone into this in the seminar 'MLnd ~n BuddhLst ~sychology', but how do they relate to one another, the cLttas and the caitasLkas? .... see what they are?

S: This is not easy. It is explained in MLnd Ln Buddhtst Ssychology;

we do discuss it quite a bit in the seminar. But even so, it is not very

clear, perhaps in a sense deliberately so. But you could even say that the cLtta is the leading caLtasaka. There are a number of mental states; among all those - this is putting it very roughly and non-traditionally one is as it were the dominant one, and it is carrying all the others with it. They are associated with it, so it has a different relation to them than they have to it or than they have among themselves. So this leading mental state, as it were, which gives its character to the whole complex, this is called the catta; and the others which are as it were carried along with it by this leading mental state, are called cae tasLkas . And, of course, the ctfta - though, again, this is not fully clear - is of an at least quasivolitional nature. CLtta has a sort of volitional connotation as well as

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a purely psychological one.

Ratnaguna: I was wondering if the caitastEas had volitional, ( )physical mental functions or could be translated as 'mental functions'.

S: That is just misleading. I won't say that they never have any volitional connotation at all but it is definitely the cLtta itself which provides the main thrust as it were of the whole complex. The citta sort of colours, also, it is said, the caetasikas; though they do have the distinctive nature, it is modified by the nature of the cLtta with which they are associated.

Ratnaguna: Can I just go back to these, I think there are, five factors in the first dhyana? You called them jhanangas, did you?

S: Yes, factors or limbs of the dhyana.

Ratnaguna: And eight cittas? Or is that something different?

S: Well, at that level of classification, in a way, the distinction of citta and caitas hasn't arisen. That is something later which is sort

of superimposed upon the jhananga classification. So, to the best of

my recollection, when they are as it were included in the Abhidharma classification, they are classified as caitasLkas.

Suvajra: You have just given us a simplified explanation Or cLttas and caLttasEas and the relationship between them. Is that from the point of view of one particular school?

S: No, not at all, it is much more general.

Suvajra: Then are the views of the Theravada and Sarvastivada a bit more complex as to the relationship between the citta and the caLttasLka?

S: No, not really. It is mainly with regard to the enumeration of the eaitasLkas. They don't enumerate them in quite the same way. I can't remember any actual difference of view between them with regard to the relationship between cLtta and caitasLka, but certainly there is some difference in the classification of caLttasikas. Well, there are also differences in their analysis of zupa, for instance. But the broad general principles are clearly the same. It is just a difference in the working out of details. I do suggest, for a discussion of the cLttas and caLttasLkas in general, you look at the seminar on 'htLnd cn BuddhLst ~sychology', which

is certainly one of those that we need to have edited and published. It

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was one of the most valuable seminars, I think, and one of the most valuable  
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texts. There is a short introductory section on citta and caLttasLkas.

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Abhaya: The next question is from Kulamitra about the distinction between Nirvana with substratum and without.

Kulamitra: On what basis do the Sarvastivada distinguish between Nirvana with and without substratum? Is it just a technical categorisation?  
a) an essential distinction?

S: Are you referring to the distinction of upadhis and anupadhis?

Kulamitra: Well, in the lecture you just call it two kinds of Nirvanas. My study group informed me

that this was with or without substratum, which I believe just means with or without a body.

S: I think it must refer to the upadhisesa and anupadhisesa. But there

is also a parallel distinction - which I think is found more in the Sarvastivada - between the upadhisesa and the anupadhisesa.

Kulamitra: Well, the context it arose in was that, in the lecture, you say that, for the Sarvastivada, whereas for the Theravada the Unconditioned is just Nirvana, for the Sarvastivada it is space and the two kinds of Nirvana.

S: Ah, yes. For the Theravada and for the Sarvastivada, there are the two kinds of Nirvana, which are upadhisesa and anupadhisesa, which are with

or without substratum or remainder. They correspond to nirvana and parinirvana

nirvana. The Buddha, at the time of his Enlightenment, achieves nirvana or achieves parinirvana. That is called upadhisesa and parinirvana because he has an

upadhi, literally an adjunct or substratum, in the form of the physical body, to which that nirvanic experience, so to speak, is still attached. At the time of the Buddha's death, as we would say, that physical body, that adjunct or substratum, becomes detached from the nirvanic experience, though it is not said that the nirvanic experience exists thereafter as distinct from not existing. But when the nirvanic experience at the moment of death becomes detached from the physical body, or even the psycho-physical personality, you could say, of the person having that experience, then that Nirvana is called anupadhisesa - parinirvana without a remainder in the form of a body, without a basis in the physical body. So that distinction is common both to the Theravada and the Sarvastivada - is common, I think, to all forms of Buddhism.

Kulamitra: I found it difficult to understand why that distinction is made,  
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so I wondered whether it was a more technical categorisation or whether there was something to learn about the spiritual life from it, at least on a sort of cosmological level - in terms of cosmic significance.

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S: It is difficult to say why the distinction was made. Why do people make distinctions anyway? There is always some subjective basis for it. I mean, why do we distinguish between men and women, to mention one commoner-garden-of-Eden distinction, if you see what I mean? So sometimes it is very difficult to understand the basis for other people's distinctions, especially if they don't seem very rational. But this must have been a distinction which meant something to the early Buddhists. I think the early Buddhists liked to make distinctions. But it does seem that the distinction between the two kinds of Nirvana is only external. I don't know that this point is explicitly made, but this is certainly the suggestion; and that there is no difference in, so to speak, content, as between the one kind of Nirvana and the other.

Kulamitra: I did wonder whether it was in any way related to the distinction between at least, say, zupakaya and dhavmakaya, when it does seem to be, if not a suggestion of difference of quality, at least difference of role, or seeing things from a different point of view.

5: Supakaya is transcendental, isn't it, as well as dha2makaya, whereas the physical body, which is the upadhL, the remainder or substratum, is definitely mundane?

Kulamitra: Mm. But those two, both the with and without body, both come under the heading of transcendental, don't they?

5: Except that in the case of the 2upakaya and the sa7bhogakaya one must

not take the term kaya too literally. The Tibetans translate that by a

quite different word from how they translate the ordinary term for body; in fact, even in Sanskrit it is deha and kaya. Deha is the ordinary word for body; kaya is a quite special word.

Abhaya: Kulamitra again on the enumeration of 46 mental functions with their subsections.

K~ mitra: In the lecture you told us that the Sarvastivada divided the

caatasLka dha2mas into six basic groups, and you told us about those groups. But the third and the fourth you talked 2bout together, just sayins that

S: What were these third and fourth?

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Kulamitra: The third and fourth, as I understood it, were thinys which were common to zil unskilful and defiled dha2nas, I think was the term you used. And then you said there were eight altogether, so you didn't tell us how many dha2nas were in the third and how many in the fourth. And it wasn't very clear to me whether you were using 'unskilful' and 'defiled' as different things,

Ar whtzhpr i t vlnq itis:t trvi nn tn ni x/P sn i mnreSSion of different

aspects of the same thing.

S: Possibly that was what it was. I also have a vague recollection that I was leaving people a little bit of homework to do, as it were, and not wanting to do all the work for them, because they could find out these things quite easily from Guenther's ShLlosophy and Xsychology Ln the vbhLdha2na.

Kulamitra: I tried today, quite unsuccessfully.

5: Oh. Look in - this may be clearer - Yamakami(?) Sogen's Systans of BuddhcstLc Thought, which we have. At least, I hope we have it. I haven't seen it for some time. There is also Takakusu, £ssentials of Buddhtst Xhtlosophy. He has a chapter on the Vaibhasika. But one can find it out. But I think in that lecture I was very conscious of the fact that there was a lot of detail in the Abhidharma; I didn't want to go into too much cietail, didn't want to put

people off; just to give them, first of all, a broad idea about the principles of the Abhidharma, and then a bit of illustrative detail. I thought that, in the case of the Abhidharma, the big danger always is that one just gets lost. One doesn't see the wood for the trees. So I was concerned mainly to give an outline of the wood, and just describe a few of the trees in an illustrative way.

Abhaya: The next question is from Tejananda on thoughts that have as their object Nirvana.

Tejananda: You speak of the Theravadin classification of dhavras according to the plane on which they occur, i.e. ka7a, zupa, a2upa, and also the non-plane of the Transcendental. In relation to this, you say that on the plane of the Transcendental there occur the thouahts which have as their obiect Nirvana. So what exactly

are these thoughts? What is their nature?

S: Well, these thoughts are what constitute uipassana. Vtpassana is a thought - to use that expression - which has Nirvana as its object. One mustn't forget that the Abhidharma - maybe the Theravada generally - sees

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Nirvana as the Transcendental object. At least to outward appearances, the Abhidharma is a scientific system, in the sense that it reduces everything to objects. It doesn't really take the subjective into consideration. It seems to assume that whatever we think of as subject can be reduced to or rendered in terms of object. So it thinks of Nirvana, of Nibbana, as a transcendental object.

Putting it in another way, it sees the distinction for practical purposes between subject and object as being absolute; though again, in principle, it doesn't recognise the existence of the subject, it breaks it down into objects. So it thinks of uepassana and pta jna in terms of the getting into view of this transcendental object which is Nirvana, and it is that which constitutes the emancipation. You can get it into view in various ways. There are various as it were doors of access to it, which are the uLnsksas. When you contemplate the unsatisfactory nature of conditioned things, you enter, so tc speak, the Unconditioned, or you view the Unconditioned from or through the door of aptanLheta; and similarly, if you see the Unconditioned in terms of no-self, you view the Unconditioned through the door of sunyata. In the case of the third uLnsksa, it is a little different, because there - so it is said according to tradition - your object is not Nirvana itself, but the thoughts which prevent you from seeing Nirvana, or the concepts which obstruct your view of Nirvana.

The Theravada pre\_sents things in this rather literalistic way. I think it doesn't matter if you just do the exercise, so to speak. But don't interpret it all philosophically in a literalistic way. It doesn't matter if you adopt a literalistic attitude, but you mustn't really think literalistically. There is a slight difference of terminology between what I have just said and what I said a little while ago, because I did say a little while ago you mustn't adopt a literalistic attitude; there I am using 'attitude' much more broadly. But perhaps I should say here not so much 'literalistic attitude', but you can take up a literalistic stance, as it were, in your practice. Otherwise you end up by explaining everything away and not doing any practice at all.



Ratnaguna: I don't quite see that, Bhante. In what way - ?

S: Well, it's like, say, in your visualisation practice; you visualise, say, Avalokitesvara or Manjughosa 'out there', but you know that in Ultimate Reality - or at least you think that in Ultimate Reality - he is not 'out there', because to think of him as 'out there' you are accepting as ultimate

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the subject-object duality. But that is exactly what you have to do to begin with to get anywhere actually with your practice. So you take up this literalistic stance, as I've called it, of you being here and Manjughosa being there. This is what you have to do for the time being to get anywhere with your practice at all. Later on, on the basis of whatever you experience as a result of taking up that literalistic stance, you can adopt a different stance, or maybe not adopt any stance at all.

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Ratnaguna: So you have to suspend disbelief while you are doing the practice?

S: Oh, it is much more than suspending disbelief! You have in a sense to have a positive belief. Otherwise it is difficult to marshal all your energies behind what you are trying to do. So I would say it is more than suspending disbelief. You can't really suspend disbelief because that goes against what you actually believe. It is more like accepting or recognising what you do actually believe; because you do believe in duality, so you just base yourself on that for the time being. It is not even that you take up a dualistic stance. You are saturated with a dualistic outlook, so you sort of accept it for the time being, and you practise within that provisional framework till you can get out of it or beyond it.

Abhaya: I have a question. The Abhidharma makes this distinction between compounded and un-compounded dharmas. In view of your favouring of the dynamic interpretation of Nirvana, I wondered how useful you find this

distinction.

S: Ah, yes. I still do find it useful. I think it can be retained, but I think we have to interpret it or look at it in a different way. I won't go into it now, because it's rather abstruse, and I have not really explained it properly before, but I think you can speak of, let us say, the Spiral order in terms of the un-compounded. But you have to redefine, or perhaps understand more deeply, what is meant by compounded and what is meant by un-compounded. Un-compounded here would not mean just 'not made up of parts' not in the ordinary sense; but I won't go into that now. I always prefer not to discard completely the traditional terminology, but to develop it and extend it.

But if you take the notion of compound and not-compound in a crudely literalistic way, you end up in all sorts of philosophical difficulties. We will have to save that for another occasion. I will probably have to write something about it, because it is a little abstruse.

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Abhaya: That leaves us, I think, with just one question, possibly two, from Ratnaguna - he has

just got one - on the karmically skilful dhaunas

in Nirvana.

Ratnaguna:

2a

In the lecture you say that karmically skilful and neutral states occur on all four planes, whereas unskilful cLttas only occur in the world of sensuous desire. Are you saying, then, that karmically skilful cLttas occur on the Transcendental plane?

S: To the best of my recollection, they are sometimes described as skilful, say with reference to themselves, in the sense that they do not differ from I was going to say that they don't differ from the corresponding states found within the mundane, but of course they do differ in the sense that they are conjoined with Insight. But one could say, none the less, that even though they are conjoined with Insight there is a sense in which they are the same. For instance, a Buddha has nrEta. We might have a bit of netta; it is a skilful mental state. So the fact that the Buddha has Insight and that his Insight is conjoined with nBtta does not mean that because he has Insight the netta ceases to exist. Though at the same time it is nBtta made, you could say, infinite by virtue of the Insight with which it was associated. So it would be misleading, I think, to say that there are no skilful mental states in the nirvanic experience. It is not so much that the Insight cancels out the positive or skilful mental states so much as takes them up into itself, removes any imperfections and makes them permanent. Do you see what I mean?

Ratnaguna: Not really, no. I don't quite understand why a Buddha is said to have no karmic mental states.

S: Well, he is said to have no karmic mental states in the sense that and this brings in the technical term I was going to mention - that his mental states are aktzya(?), which literally means inoperative. That is to say, inasmuch as his mental states, if one uses that term, are transcendental, they do not have any karmic consequences. This is why a Buddha is not reborn under the law of karma. So they are inoperative. But then to come back to the previous point - when, for instance, you are in a state of dhyana, you may experience all sorts of positive mental events, but does that mean that when you become Enlightened you no longer experience those? You no longer experience them in so far as they are mundane and karma-producing, but you experience them in so far as they are not mundane and not karma-producing; and you experience them in that way inasmuch as they are

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now conjoined with Insight or Wisdom.

Ratnaguna: So you would say a Buddha would experience skilful mental states but they are not karmic?

S: That's right, you could put it like that, yes. So you could say you can have skilful mental states which are karmic because associated with the as2avas still in a subtle form, and therefore not completely skilful. And you can have what are nominally those same skilful mental states associated with the experience of Enlightenment, in which case they become

inoperative in the sense that they no longer produce any karmic consequences. I think the difficulty is largely semantic, because we don't have any terms for purely transcendental experiences. We have to transfer to those experiences terms from higher spiritual experience which is relatively accessible to us, as when we speak of the Buddha's metta, the Buddha's kasanaland so on. It is not that what we know as metta and kasanaland utterly cease to exist in the case of a Buddha; rather that they are perfected and purified and, as I say, made permanent.

Dharmapriya: I still didn't actually understand why these positive mental states are inoperative and have no karmic consequence. It seems to be more a matter of definition rather than accurate description

S: Oh, no, because in the case of a Buddha they are devoid of the ignorance and the craving which perpetuate the samsaric process.

Dharmapriya: In other words, they are not karmic.

S: Yes, you could say that they are not karmic, I think the difficulty arises in thinking of a Buddha as being devoid of ignorance and craving without at the same time making his state, to use that term, appear completely negative. Schopenhauer ends his *The World as Will and Idea* by saying something to the effect that to those to whom the world is everything Nirvana is nothing!

Anyway, how did you on the whole get on with this lecture today?

Abhaya: I think we were floundering a bit, because very few of us have done any study on the Abhidharma, so we were

S: So perhaps before you actually take your study groups you should read up a bit on MLnd Ln BuddhGst Xsychology. I think that would be very useful.

Those who have more time could dip into Guenther, or even just look through what I have written in *The Tibetan Legacy* about the Abhidharma, just that

one chapter on 'The Fundamental Abhidharma'. Maybe you need to do a little  
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bit of homework with regard to this lecture.

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Suvajra: You mentioned in the 'Mind and Buddhist Psychology' seminar that

there were two books that you regarded as being the most viable of all those you recommend in the area: philosophy and psychology of the Dharma and MLnd Ln BuddhLst Ssychology itself. That was about 10 years ago. Are there any more that you would add to the list?

S: I don't think so, I'm afraid. I don't think they have been superseded by any means. Very little has appeared on the Abhidharma. That is interesting, bearing in mind that I said that 10 years ago.

Dharmapriya: What about Govinda's book on The Psychological Attitude of Early Buddhist Philosophy?

S: It's all right. I don't think he is as good as Guenther. He bases himself, don't forget, on the *dShidhannavasangika*(?), which is a very late work and represents, according to Guenther, and I think I agree with him, a very - what shall I say? - reduced version of the teaching of the *FbhLdhanna* ?*taka* itself. Guenther describes it as characterised by extreme poverty of thought, representing 'impoverished' as scholastic sort of impoverishment. Yes, it is a sort of systematisation, but it is systematisation at the expense of richness. So Govinda's book is based on that. I think some of the earlier parts of the book, about the background of Indian thought, are quite out of date, but none the less there are some useful sections here and there, especially what he has to say, perhaps characteristically, about positive mental events, and the fact that in the universe positive states outweigh negative ones, according to the *Abhidharma*, so how can one therefore describe Buddhism as pessimistic? He is good at those sort of points. But I think one has to read him a little selectively, or maybe a little critically, in the positive sense of the term. And people say that his diagrams are more difficult to follow than the text itself! I have never even tried to work them out!

: What about Schererbatsky's 'central concepts'? I can't remember the exact title. *Ennum2atton of Dha2nes in the 5a2uast~uadLn* ...

S: Yes, that is also quite an important book, that is true. That deals more with the underlying philosophical principle. It is not an easy book, but yes, it is quite an important book, that's true.

Prakasha: What about the actual *Abhidharma* texts themselves, like *Buddha Q & A ABP I/2/12*

ghosa's *~ath of XU2 ity*?

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S: Well, The *~ath of XU2 ity* is not so much an *Abhidharma* text in itself as based to some extent on the *Abhidhamma*. Those who are heroically inclined

can actually go through the vast translations of practically all the books

of the *dEhLdhamna* ?*~taka*. I deliberately said 'go through' and not 'read',

because one can hardly read them, except one or two. Certainly one can read the *Katha-uatthu*. I wouldn't say that one could read the *ynaka* or some of the other books. The *~uggala-pannatt* is relatively readable. It is quite short. The *DesLgnatLon of A~unan Types*, it is called in the English translation. There is a short description of it in *The Eternal Legacy*.

But how are you going to relate all this material to your groups and their needs? Are you going to be able to do that, do you think? Or are you only going to treat it as a fossil of Buddhist thought? I think it might be a good idea to concentrate on the principles of the *Abhidharma*; what the *Abhidharma* actually tries to do - that it systematises Buddhist teaching, tries to define technical terms, seeks to define technical terms. And also - what was

the other one?

: Systematises the whole path.

S: Systematises the whole path, that's the one, yes. One can make the point that it is a natural, even inevitable, stage in the development of any spiritual tradition. And then one can perhaps go a little bit into the question of the distinction between cetas and cetasas, and also perhaps, via Mind in Buddhist psychology, into the distinction between cetasas which are found in all mental states, those which are found in all skilful ones and so on. Well, perhaps a bit on those skilful ones and the importance of cultivating them. One could adopt some such approach, with a bit of discussion and practical applications and so on relating to the practice. One should try not to leave people with the impression that the Abhidharma is just a fossil.

Kulamitra: I have a question which I think people would find very interesting and helpful from that point of view: What Abhidharma teachings have you found of personal, practical use in leading a spiritual life? S: I can't say that I have found very many of them of personal practical use. I would say probably most of all the enumeration of the positive mental events. I think that is very inspiring, even. But I think years ago I gave very little attention to the Abhidharma. Well, I mean I read

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- well, I went through the Fbhcdh a navaṅgaha with Kashyapji, that was

how I started. And I read Govinda, I read Guenther when he came out, and then I also read chapters on the Abhidharma in books like Systems of Buddhist Thought, Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy, and later on I studied some of the books like 22ānāpāṇasīlī and so on. Oh yes, and very

early also - well, really the first book on Abhidharma I read was Nyanatiloka's Guide through the Fbhidhaṅga-sūtra. That I found very helpful. Yes, and his explanations of the paṭiccasamuppāda. That was when I was in Ceylon. When do you actually start your course?

Abhaya: Next week or the week after.

S: Oh, well, it will all be fresh in your mind. But do a little bit of homework. I suspect you will need to do your homework with regard to this lecture and the next one, at least. With regard to at least some of the others, you will probably not need to do so much homework, but with regard to the Abhidharma and the Yogachara, I suspect you will.

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## DAY TWO

Sangharakshita: How many questions are there?

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Abhaya: Thirteen questions.

S: Ah well, not too bad - depending on the questions, of course! It also occurred to me that there is a definite system in many of my talks, that one really needs to know the ropes of quite well. A lot of the most important elements are contained in this lecture: conditionality, the two kinds of conditionality, the Wheel, the Spiral, the positive nLdanas. Anyway, let's see what you come up with.

Abhaya: The first question this evening is from Prakasha on conditionality in the Buddha's experience and in pre-Buddhist thought.

Prakasha: In the lecture you suggest that the Buddha formulated the principle of conditionality after his Enlightenment experience. Is conditionality entirely original to the Buddha, or are there precursors? Did other Indian religious systems adopt conditionality?

S: The traditional Buddhist view, of course, is that the teaching of conditionality, the teaching of p2attya sa7utpada, is distinctive to the Buddha,

and in fact it does represent the conceptual formulation of the content

of his Enlightenment itself. This is made very clear at the beginning of the Tattuasang2eha, where the Buddha is saluted as the teacher of p2atctya

sa7utpada. Those of you who are of a more studious nature will be delighted

to hear that I have at last managed to obtain a copy of the English translation of the Tattuasang2aha, which has been out of print for several decades and which you may remember I studied quite intensively when I was in South India, years and years ago, during my wandering period. It has been reprinted in the two stout volumes now reposing in the Order Library for the benefit of the interested. It is a rather tough work but very interesting.

Abhaya: What is the title again?

S: The Tattuasangzaha of Kamalasila.

: Is it a commentary, Bhante?

S: It is the author's commentary on his own verses. But I cite this just as an example, to show that the traditional Buddhist view is that the p2atLtya

sanutpada is the distinctive teaching of the Buddha. The very least we can say from a more as it were scholarly point of view is that there is

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no trace of the teaching of conditionality in that sophisticated form in pre-Buddhistic Indian philosophy and religion. In fact, it is the general Buddhist view that the different schools of Indian philosophy incline to either one or the other of the two extremes that the teaching of conditionality is meant to avoid. In other words - I have talked about this before, I think - saying that the ancient Indian classification of theories of causation, to use that term, is in two kinds: that is, what is called satEa2yauada and what is called asatEa2yavada - that is to say, the doctrine which holds that cause and effect are identical, and one substance, as it were, the

modifications being only superficial; and the doctrine which holds that cause and effect are different. Buddhism points out that in either case causation is really impossible. So *pratitya saṃutpada* really upholds the view that the so-called cause and the so-called effect are neither identical nor completely different, because in both cases actually causation would be impossible. The relationship between them is one of what one can call conditionality, the formula for which is that in dependence upon A, B arises. You say that B arises in dependence upon A, so as to avoid saying that it is the same, a mere transformation, a mere *paśenama*, and also to avoid saying that the two are different, in which case obviously you wouldn't be concerned with causation at all; because in that case you could get rice from barley seed or even from stones.

So it does seem that, even though there might have been very vague anticipations - and there is no real evidence even for those - the Buddha's teaching of *pratitya saṃutpada*, of conditionality, using that as the equivalent, was really unique, peculiar to himself.

Dharmapriya: What about later schools, because they did tend to borrow quite a bit from Buddhism, from what I understood <of> Sankara and possibly Patanjali. Did they just borrow other aspects and not touch, or borrow, the core of conditionality?

S: They don't seem to have touched conditionality, not directly. But one could, of course, refer to the *maṃyā* doctrine in this connection, that is the *maṃyā* doctrine according to Sankara, who is believed to have been influenced by Buddhism - or who is accused of being a crypto-Buddhist by other Hindus. Inasmuch as the *pratitya saṃutpada* is a form neither of *satyavada* nor *asatyavada*, one cannot describe the *pratitya saṃutpada* in terms of either existence or non-existence. It represents something which is neither absolutely existent nor absolutely non-existent. It represents what the Yogacharins described as *patatantra* - relative reality. You remember, accor

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ding to the Yogachara - I don't remember if I went into this in the lecture

on 'The Depth Psychology of the Yogachara' - the Yogachara distinguishes three kinds of reality, to use that term. There is *patatantra*, *pazekalpeta* and *pazenespanna*. *Satenespanna* represents Ultimate Reality. *Satekalpeta* is

imputed, imagined or illusory reality, to use that contradictory expression. But *patatantra* is relative reality.

So, for this reason, the *pratitya saṃutpada* is said to be neither absolutely existent - because if it was absolutely existent it could be regarded as absolute Reality - nor absolutely non-existent, otherwise it could be regarded as illusory. It is relatively existent. And one can say the same thing of *naya* - that is, Sankara says the same thing of *maṃyā*. He says that *maṃyā* is *aneśuanacanya* (?): it is inexpressible, which means it cannot be described either as existent or non-existent. So in that way the *maṃyā* of Sankara and of Advaita Vedanta generally corresponds, one might say I don't know whether the comparison has ever been made - with the *pratitya saṃutpada* of Buddhism, though clearly it is a different kind of concept and used in a different way. But it is used to account for the fact that the Absolute appears to be other than itself.

Ratnaguna: What is maya?

S: It is usually translated as delusion, the cosmic delusion or illusion. Sankara says that what we normally perceive and experience is all maya. It is usually translated as 'all is illusion', it is not absolutely real, it is not really there. But Sankara does not quite say that, because he defines maya as that which is neither existent nor non-existent, which is inexpressible. It is something which ought not to be there but which is there, in a way. And, according to him, it is maya, often personified as a goddess, who conceals Brahman or Ultimate Reality from our perception. Maya is also, again, sometimes identified with the prakṛti of the Sāṃkhya, which we talked about yesterday. So even though, to the best of my knowledge, the Hindu philosophers do not deal with the Buddhist conception of pratītyasamutpāda, in a way there is something in Sankara's Advaita Vedānta, in the form of the māyavāda, which sort of vaguely corresponds to it.

Usually, popular interpretations of Vedānta would suggest that maya corresponds to illusion, but that is not really so. It corresponds to relative reality rather than to illusion proper; even though some of the illustrations that are used to explain it would suggest that it is illusion rather than relative reality.

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Dharmapriya: Coming back to examples of pratītyasamutpāda being neither existent nor non-existent - the danger of saying that it is existent meaning that it would be absolutely real - would it not, however, be safe to say that conditionality in the Transcendental, i.e. conditionality in the Spiral above the eighth link, is absolutely real in that sense?

S: Is absolutely real?

Dharmapriya: One is dealing only with the Transcendental, at least only with transcendental experience, and going above yathabhūtanānādassana.

S: I suppose it depends on the sense in which you use the expression 'absolutely real'. Because, as far as one can see, the Buddha's original teaching - or the Buddha himself, one might say - didn't really use these expressions, not in a philosophical way. And in the Dhammapāda you have the expressions sat and asat, which can be translated as 'real' and 'unreal', though again not very as it were philosophically. But it is as though the Buddha himself didn't think quite in those terms. Perhaps those were terms introduced at a later stage in the development of Buddhist thought. So when one speaks of, say, the cyclical order of conditionality, one speaks of the spiral order, but at that stage one does not, it seems, think of one of them being only relatively real and the other as absolutely real. That sort of distinction in that context just doesn't seem to be made. One could ask: 'Well, could one make it?' But I am doubtful, because the two terminologies seem to be so different that it is not easy to see that they could be used interchangeably. Also, don't forget that 'absolutely real' means, in a sense, unchanging. What does one mean by 'unchanging'? In what sense is the spiral order of vedanās unchanging? It is not unchanging in the sense that there is no mobility, as it were, but it is unchanging in the sense that there is no reaction to an opposite. It is unchanging in the sense that the same direction, so to speak, is maintained. In fact, you could say it is even more unchanging than what we usually think of as unchanging because it is becoming, so to speak, more and more itself, as distinct from persisting in being itself.



So perhaps one has to distinguish between change and something for which we don't really have a term. And that something for which we don't have a term could be thought of in terms of permanence and reality. Perhaps that is as close as we can get to it.

But what was the original question? We have strayed away from that a bit, haven't we?

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: The question has strayed away!

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5: It was whether the teaching of p2atetya samutpada in any form existed before the time of the Buddha. I think on the whole pre-Buddhistic thought hadn't reached that level of sophistication - or abstraction, even, one could say. One could try to correlate symbolical representations with p2atetya sa7utpada. One could - I have done this myself, I think - one could perhaps posit a sort of correspondence between the reactive type of conditionality and the path of the moon, and the cyclical type with the path of the sun. You find that sort of distinction in Vedic literature. Whether they are really the same thing is difficult to say, but perhaps one could bring them into correspondence. Because, according to Vedic thought, on death one travelled either to the world of the fathers and the moon, I think it was, or else to the world of the sun. One came back from the world of the moon but not from the world of the sun.

I also developed a theory that I haven't really talked about much that there are religions of the moon and religions of the sun. Religions of the moon are sort of mother-goddess-oriented, and religions of the sun are young-hero-oriented. Religions of the moon are concerned with the earth, with night, darkness; and religions of the sun are concerned with the heavens, with the sky, with light. But that is perhaps a little fanciful. You might even find - as I say, it is a little fanciful - but there are little hints in the Dhammapada: there is that line about the hansa, the goose or swan, going on the 'path of the sun' by means of its supernormal power - its Eddhe or power. And, of course, in non-Buddhistic literature the hamsa is a symbol for the great sage. You remember Ramakrishna was called Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the Supreme goose - that is a literal translation - or supreme swan, to put it more poetically. The pazamahanza is a sage of very high spiritual attainments, according to the Upanishads. So one could make something of all these little correlations.

But, at least in conceptual terms, let us say, leaving aside any possible correlation between the Buddha's rather conceptual presentation of the content of his spiritual experience, leaving aside any possible symbolical correlations from an earlier period, there seem to be no anticipations. That is really the answer.

Abhaya: The second question is from Kulamitra on Freud's and Darwin's use of conditionality.

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Kulamitra: In the lecture, you give the examples of Darwin and Freud as men who applied the principles of conditionality to their own fields with revolutionar effect. But surely, it was scientific Y principles of causality, rather than principles of conditionality, that they applied?

S: Yes, I think I have gone into this business of conditionality versus causality, because it created some confusion. I did in the past distinguish between conditionality and causality. But when I spoke of causality I was taking the term causality in the traditional Indian sense of being either *satEazyavads* or *asatEa2yavada*. But the causality of modern science is much more akin to the conditionality of Buddhism. So one can certainly speak of Darwin, say, applying the principle of causation; but if one was to speak of Darwin applying the principle of causation, one wouldn't be referring to him as applying the principle of either *satEa2yavada* or *asatEa2yauada*, as known to Indian philosophy. One would speak of him as applying something which was much closer to the general principle of conditionality, as we call it; in other words, in dependence on A, B arises, without any speculation as to whether A and B were identical or different. That sort of speculation is unnecessary, as far as I know, from a scientific point of view. So Darwin applied the principle of causality - that is to say, the principle of what Buddhists would call conditionality - to the whole subject of biology: that in dependence upon one living form another arises, as against the hitherto held view that species were static, having been created by God. Certainly there was no conception of one so to speak evolving out of another, or being traceable back to an original ancestor, of which there were the various modifications. So of course certainly we regard Darwin as thinking, so to speak, in terms of this formula: in dependence upon lower forms of life, higher forms of life arise.

I think that is a quite useful way of putting it, even if Darwin didn't put it quite like that, because there is a great problem, the problem of reductionism. For instance, supposing you say that consciousness arises out of matter. For many scientists that means that consciousness is only a form of matter. You reduce consciousness to matter, as an epiphenomenon. So that is reductionism. So if you use the formula of 'in dependence upon the lower, the higher arises', you avoid reductionism. On the other hand, you are not denying any connection between the so-called lower and the so-called higher, as you would do if perhaps you formulated it in a more traditional Christian way, of God breathing the breath of life into Adam's nostrils

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and that sort of thing. So I think this is something that could be investigated - that the concept of conditionality as understood by Buddhism, which in Western terms is really a form of causality, could be applied certainly to biology.

I forget what I had in mind as regards Freud; I can't remember that. I think it must have been to the effect that - well, for instance, Freud is popularly said (I don't know whether this really does justice to Freud's view) to reduce, as it were - again, reductionism - various high emotions just to sex. But you could say that certain emotions arose in dependence upon the sexual instinct without thereby necessarily reducing them to that sexual instinct. So there, too, it would be a useful formula, enabling one to avoid that particular pitfall.

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Kulamitra: I suppose what I had wondered was whether Freud and Darwin actually saw things in those broader terms, or whether they hadn't used causality in the reductionistic sense.

S: I would have to go through Darwin's books. I don't think Darwin was in fact a reductionist. I don't think he would have said that man is after all only an ape. I think Freud came very

close, though, to reductionism, as far as I remember, from what I have read of his writings; he does imply the concept of sublimation, but he seems to use the term sublimation in a reductionist sense. He speaks of culture as a sublimation of the sexual instinct, doesn't he? But he would seem to suggest that culture can be reduced to the sexual instinct or to an expression of the sexual instinct. Though sometimes he speaks about culture in such an enthusiastic or appreciative way, that you can't really believe that he adopts this reductionist approach. I think you have to study his text very carefully before arriving at a definite conclusion whether he was reductionist or not, whether he did employ an equivalent of the Buddhist form of conditionality or not. Darwin, I am pretty certain, wasn't a reductionist, and therefore in effect did use, or think in terms of, the Buddhist type of causation or causality, or what we call conditionality; as perhaps scientists generally do without fully realising it. It would be interesting perhaps to go into this a little.

Dharmapriya: I had always understood there to be a difference between conditionality and causality in the sense of Aristotelian logic, especially when one starts to go backwards, to negate; because with the cyclical *ntdanas* one can so to speak undo them simply by removing the immediate condition one can undo the succeeding effect - which you can't do in traditional Western

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logic in the traditional causal chain. If A causes B

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S: I think - modern scientific thinking does, as far as I know, maintain, as does Buddhism - that there is no one cause for anything. What we call the cause is only a label for the sum total of conditions, and if you remove those conditions you no longer give rise to the phenomenon. That would seem to be the Buddhist view. Aristotle's theory of causation spoke in terms of four kinds of causes, as he called them: that is to say, he spoke in terms of the efficient cause, the material cause, the formal cause and the final cause, which is quite interesting. For instance, he gives the example of, say, a pot. The efficient cause of the pot of the potter.

The material cause of the pot is the clay. The formal cause of the pot is the idea in the potter's mind in accordance with which he makes the pot. And the final cause, of course, is the purpose for which the pot is made, i.e. cooking food or holding water. If one analyses this, one can say that really these so-called four causes just represent a sum total of four conditions, all of which must be present for the pot to be produced. So you could say that in dependence upon these four conditions arises the phenomenon known as 'pot'. So actually Aristotle's theory of causation is not so much at variance with the Buddhist theory of what we call conditionality as one might at first sight have supposed.

I think that the broadly scientific attitude is that a whole complex of conditions is requisite for the production of a certain phenomenon, and when those conditions are not present the phenomenon does not arise. If you want to produce the phenomenon, you have to create or produce the conditions. But of course science operates more on the material level, as it were, and this certainly does not apply in the thoroughgoing way that Buddhism does to the world of mind. And it does not seem to have the concept of what we call the spiral type of conditionality, to the best of my knowledge; though one would have to go into this a bit more, because nowadays science is developing all sorts of theories that one hasn't heard about. So

there might be analogies to this, even in science. But I am a bit doubtful, actually, on a pzLoztgrounds that we won't go into now. It seems to me, as I have said in the talk, that in the material world, so to speak, only the cyclical type of conditionality operates, whereas in the mental world, so to speak, both the cyclical and the spiral types of conditionality are operative. I say this on a pzLozL grounds, but to verify it empirically one would have to carry on quite a lot of investigations to see exactly how

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it worked out.

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There are several things that I wanted to devote time to but haven't been able to, just due to lack of time. For instance, what do we mean by opposites? This is something I have never gone into: you know, Buddhaghosa seems to take it for granted that we know what opposites are, or opposites of a definite type. I have come to the conclusion, though, that opposites are of many different kinds and that perhaps there are such things as true opposites and things which also are not true opposites. For instance, you speak of night and day as opposites, so are night and day opposites in the same way, say, that male and female are opposites or, for instance, that positive and negative charges of electricity are opposites? What exactly does one mean by an opposite? This needs to be gone into much more thoroughly. If I cannot do it, somebody has to do it, because unless one understands what is really meant by opposites, how can you understand thoroughly or in detail what is meant by action and reaction between pairs of things which are opposites? We speak of love and hate as opposites. So there is maybe a bit of woolly thinking, or at least not fully defined thinking, to be cleared up here.

Kulamitra: It is surprising nobody else has gone into it, isn't it?

S: It is in a way, yes. These are little things I think about from time to time! Well, maybe it's just our ignorance. Maybe quite a lot of people have gone into it; there might even be books written on the subject, for all I know. I think probably not, but you can't be sure. Not necessarily in this country; maybe in Finland someone has written a big thick book on the subject!

Kulamitra: You would think one of the Taoists would have written something on it.

5: No, not quite in this sort of way. They might have told some very entertaining stories to illustrate the point!

And then, you know, there is Blake's theory about contraries and contradictories, or contraries and opposites. Anyway, perhaps we should pass on to the next question. I hope that has given you a bit of food for thought, possibly for research, even.

Abhaya: Pralcasha did have a question on the difference between causality and conditionality. I suspect that has been answered. Is that so, or am I presuming?

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Prakasha: No, it hasn't. We were trying to clarify the difference between causality and conditionality

5: Well, that has been done, hasn't it?

Prakasha: Y-yes.

5: Bearing in mind that, in distinguishing between causality and conditionality, I have in mind not any modern, scientific theory of causality, but those old Indian theories, what I call satEazyavada and asatEazyavada. So then the question is - ?

Prakasha: To what extent can one talk about causality representing the spatio-analytic and conditionality the dynamic-synthetic principles?

5: Conditionality does cover, of course, both the spatial analytic and, what did you call it, spatial dynamic or temporal dynamic?

Prakasha: Dynamic synthetic.

5: Dynamic synthetic. I am not sure about the synthetic. Dynamic, yes. Well, both the reactive and the creative types of conditionality are dynamic. The question is, are they synthetic? What exactly does one mean in this connection by synthetic?

Kulamitra(?): Did you not use these two terms in the Suzumoto or Buddhistism?

5: I have a vague recollection that I did, but I can't remember the context.

Kulamitra: I think you used the term analytic to speak of analysing things down into dharmas; and by synthetic you were talking about the relations between them.

5: Ah, I get it, yes. For instance, the first book of the Abhidharma Pitaka is the Dhamma-sangani. This is concerned with analysis. The last book is the Xathana(?), which is concerned with synthesis in the sense that it is concerned with the interrelationships of dharmas. So, though usually the Abhidharma is spoken of as analytical, it is also at least to some extent analytical-synthetic. So how does one transfer these terms from that context the context of the dharmas and the Abhidharma - to this context of mind reactive and mind creative, or the cyclical and the spiral types of conditionality? What is their meaning or their relevance in this particular context?

Ruchiraketu: I think we were trying to look at how B arises in dependence upon A, and we were thinking that if you are thinking analytically you will

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tend to think of A and B as being discrete entities, and that A will cause B; whereas if you are looking at it more synthetically you will think that B arises in relationship with A, which is

more akin to conditionality, rather than causality. We were trying to find a distinction between causality and conditionality.

5: What does one exactly mean by 'arises in relationship with A' as distinct from 'arising in dependence upon A'? Because where there is dependence there is a relationship.

Ruchiraketu: Yes, well, we weren't making the distinction, we were trying to say that 'arises in relationship with ' is the same thing as 'arises in dependence on', but that it is different from 'is caused by'. You'd have to say that B is caused by A.

5: Well, leaving aside the ancient Indian view of causation, in what sense does conditionality not represent causality? In what sense is one using the term causality when one says that it is not a question of a causal relationship?

Prakasha: We thought it was the number of factors involved in that conditionality takes into account the whole multitude of factors, whereas causality just takes into account a specific number of factors.

5: A specific number?

Prakasha: Yes, or a limited number.

5: I think that is only a formal difference, though. Because even though we sometimes speak as though there were one cause for a particular effect, let us say, I think we are usually aware that the so-called one cause does in fact consist of a number of factors, and is therefore in fact quite a complex phenomenon. Modern science is certainly well aware of this. So the distinction does not, in a sense, amount to very much. Because sometimes you limit yourself to a certain number of factors, or you take account only of a certain number of factors, because you are only concerned with those. And, of course, presumably you could regard every particular A, and every particular B that arises in dependence on it, as consisting of an infinity of constituent factors. That is why it is sometimes said that the cause of anything that happens is everything else, in a sense. You have to limit yourself.

Dharmapriya: But is there not still a difference to do with these - did  
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you call them paccayas yesterday? - the different types of relationship that can exist, whereas when we talk of causality in the West we do tend, without reintroducing this old Indian distinction, to see things quite separately, whereas

5: Yes, it is not so much a question of B arising in dependence on A, but it is also a question - which you are saying, I think - that the West does not take into account the particular kind of way in which it arises. Yes, this is true; though I suspect that modern science may well have sorted this out also to some extent, and may well be aware. I did some years ago read inductive logic, and some of these distinctions are made there.

Kulamitra: I don't have experience of the academic scientific world, but from some of the pseudo-sciences, like sociology and to some extent history well, maybe they are just practising bad science, but my memory is that very often the questioning is along the lines of

'What caused a certain

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event?' and that, rather than seeing that there were many different factors and just taking an interest in those factors, there was always an attempt to find which was 'really' the cause.

5: Right, yes. I would say that history was a pseudo-science; I don't think there can be a science of history. One of my most strongly held views is that there can't be a science, in the strict sense, of anything that is living. That means that psychology is not a science. I would even go so far, perhaps, as to say that biology is not a science; chemistry is and astronomy is. But certainly not history; history least of all. Because it is very difficult to take into account all the causes. What 'caused' the French Revolution? Can you really answer that? All sorts of factors were involved. How can you be sure that you are giving the right weight to every particular event and every particular condition? Do you even know them all? For instance, you need to know even the kind of food that people ate, because in certain cases it had a certain kind of effect on them which would affect their minds in a particular way. For instance, they now believe that people in the Middle Ages who suffered from St. Vitus's dance were actually eating bread which was made from, I think, barley that had been affected by mildew, I think it was, and produced therefore a certain - what do they call it?

: Hallucinogenic.

Susiddhi: It was rye with ergot.

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5: Yes, that's right! Ergot. So, anyway, one doesn't always know these sort of factors.

Kulamitra: I very much agree with that, I felt that instinctively at the time; but I think what I am trying to say is that these people are not philosophers, but a lot of people working in academic, maybe pseudo-scientific fields, it seems to me, do take causality as very much a cause and an effect, rather than Buddhist conditionality which would immediately suggest a multiplicity of events.

5: Right, yes. What this really means is, I suppose, that it is more accurate and safer to speak in terms of conditions, plural, rather than in terms of the cause. From a Buddhist point of view, one of the grossest examples of speaking in terms of the cause is where you speak of God as the cause, the ultimate first cause. In some ways, according to Buddhism, that would be the greatest of all wrong views. For a well-trained Buddhist, the fact that you speak of God as 'the cause', or apply to notion of causality to God, means that one is obviously in the wrong; your argument cannot possibly be taken seriously because, to begin with, you commit that greatest of all mistakes, positing one single cause instead of a whole complex of conditions. It would really be much more logical and acceptable, really, to believe what I think some of the ancient Egyptians - or the ancient Greeks - believed, that the world, or man, was created by a whole assembly of gods working together. It would seem much more logical and scientific, would it not? At least you posit a plurality of conditions, instead of one supreme cause. I hadn't thought of that before - that actually this idea of gods and goddesses, a whole plurality of them, is really quite scientific when you come to think of it, if you regard them as causal agents! God seems hopelessly unscientific theory, from a Buddhist point of

view - the mere fact that there is just one of him.

But I think it is pretty obvious that science, to the extent that it really is science, does think in terms of congeries of conditions and not of the cause. It is perhaps only historians and people like that who are not really within the borders of science, who speak in terms of the cause of the French Revolution or the cause of the Industrial Revolution. Most historians, even, wouldn't do that. They would just enumerate quite a number of causes or conditions and just try to assess roughly their relative importance and significance.

Abhaya: Now Virananda has a question on Western philosophers and conditionality.

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Virananda: In the lecture, you spend some time defining the word 'development'. First you use the dictionary definition of it as 'gradual

progressive advancement', and then going on to mention that Buddhism sees development in terms of conditionality; you say a little further on that Darwin and Freud have formulated laws

of conditionality and thus help the Westerner gain an appreciation

of conditionality

S: This, as I think I have just made clear, is probably more consistently true of Darwin than of Freud. Freud can, I think, sometimes at least, be interpreted in another way.

Virananda: Well, I have three questions leading on from that. First, are there perhaps other Western philosophic or scientific thinkers who could be just as useful as Freud because of their

understanding of men as conditioned beings?

S: Well, let's deal with that first. I am not sure - I gave the example of Freud just because he is so well known, and so influential, for better or for worse or both. I was thinking in terms of well-known thinkers who exert a definite influence. It could be that there are lesser-known figures who think in terms of conditionality rather than in terms of causality in the Indian sense. I can't think of any offhand.

Virananda: Secondly, are there any Western thinkers whom you would single out first for their sympathy with the developmental or progressive

aspect of man, perhaps formulated in terms of laws, and who perhaps also see man as a spiritual being?

S: Well, there is Hegel, of course, isn't there? Hegel certainly saw the whole course of human history in developmental terms. But he seems to have seen it in terms of the development or progressive manifestation of the world spirit, so to speak. He seems to have tended to merge



the individual into the collective, as far as one can see, without making a detailed study of him from this point of view. But certainly, in Hegel's philosophy, you do get the very strong sense of advance and progress and development, as embodied in the whole historical process. Nowadays people tend to think of Hegel's progressive manifestation of the Absolute on earth as a sort of juggernaut, as it were. Perhaps it is; it does seem to sort of crush the individual rather. But, yes, Hegel, read perhaps a bit selectively, can be very inspiring, even, in this way.

But in his early work, *The Phenomenology of Mind* - or *Spirit* - he sort  
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of traces the progressive development, one could call it, of spirit as reflected (in a way, it is a gross over-simplification) in the individual human mind. He describes, in his own very distinctive and characteristic way, the way in which one type of mental attitude or experience, you could say, develops into another.

He also had a developmental view of logic, didn't he? He regarded the successive categories of logic as corresponding to the successive stages in the unfoldment of existence itself. I must emphasise I am grossly oversimplifying here. You would have to consult an appropriate textbook to get a proper idea of the matter.

Viranada: The third question: does seeing man as subject to progressive conditionality necessarily imply a teleological philosophy, of the sort Darwin wanted to avoid?

S: Well, you could argue that it does because the goal is Nirvana. But then again what is Nirvana? Is it a goal in the teleological sense? You could spend hours discussing this - an evening. You probably will! I would speak of teleology as representing the positing of a goal which is truly external to the nature of the thing whose goal it is. So a thing can have a goal without it being a goal in that teleological sense, inasmuch as it can have a goal which represents the fulfilment of its own being, or its own nature. So I think the spiral type of conditionality, the creative mind, has a goal in that sense but not in the former sense.

Virananda: Not in the Aristotelian sense?

S: Not in what might be regarded as the Aristotelian sense - I don't want to do any injustice to Aristotle. I suspect that Aristotle did regard the goal as being inherent in what he called the entelechy, which is essentially goal-oriented, isn't it? But if one lays down for any particular process a goal which does not respect the nature of that process itself, then one can speak of teleology; though maybe one is not using the term in the sense that it is used in all systems. But I would say that, if the goal that is posited is one that represents the fulfilment of the very nature of the process itself, then it would not be described as teleological in the sense in which, rightly or wrongly, I am using the term at present. Or rather, to discard that term altogether, there is a positing of a goal which respects the nature of the thing or process on account of which it is posited, and there is a goal which does not respect that. D. H. Lawrence talk about that, in a way, when he speaks about ideals. He is 'agin ideals', because  
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he sees an ideal as something which is posited for, say, the individual, without reference to that individual's true nature. He doesn't see the ideal - this is the way he uses the term - as representing a fulfilment of the nature of the individual, but rather as something imposed on the individual from outside. Of course, you can use the term ideal in a quite different way if you want to. Lawrence's use of the word is a bit idiosyncratic. You may remember I refer to this in my little review of the biography of Lawrence, the review entitled 'D. H. Lawrence and Spiritual Community'.

So, regardless of terminology, it is possible to as it were lay down a goal for something or someone, that does not take into account their individual nature, and it is also possible to point out the goal which does take into account their individual nature and which represents, therefore, the fulfilment of that nature, or represents the highest point of actual development of that thing or that individual, as distinct from forcing that thing or that individual into a mould for which it is not suited. You see the point of the distinction? So one can use the term teleology to refer to what one might describe as that illegitimate positing of goals. Though, in that way, people can sometimes conceive of Nirvana as their goal in a quite illegitimate way. They can posit it as their goal in a mechanical way, without in any way seeing it as representing a fulfilment of their nature ultimately. Do you see what I mean?

: I don't see that, Bhante.

S: Well, it means really you've misunderstood what is Nirvana if you do that. Do you see what I mean here? It means your thinking is quite external. Anyway, let's move on. We're getting a bit philosophical this evening, aren't we?

Abhaya: The next question is from Ratnaguna on the white segment of the Wheel of Life.

Ratnaguna: The white and black segments of the Wheel of Life. You talk about the white segment representing the ethical life and conventional religion. I've always thought that the white segment showed beings leading the spiritual life up to the point

of saṁādhi - concentration on the spiral path - i.e. they are going towards the realm of the devas. If that is so, can one \_ 9 attain to this stage by merely following conventional religion, by which I take it that you mean also following conventional

ethics? I may have got those two a bit meddled up.

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S: I think the first point to make is that diagrams or illustrations have their limitations. They can be taken too literally. If one looks at the Wheel of Life, that white segment is within the Wheel of Life, but obviously you can regard it as extending beyond the purely cyclic type of conditionality, up into the - what have I called it? - the relatively spiral? - that section of the Spiral Path from which you can fall back. You can regard it as extending as far as that. Perhaps what I said about that white segment representing the practice of ethics and conventional religion is not to be taken too literally. I think I was reading that from the way in which the figures in that segment are represented in art. But you could take it, as it were, more philosophically as simply representing all skilful mental states, right up to - but not

beyond - the point of No Return; up to the point at which *saṃsaṃ* is ready to act as a basis for the development of Insight.

Abhaya: The next question is from Dharmapriya on the meaning of *bhava* and *jāti*.

Dharmapriya: I am afraid this question is a bit long.

5: We'll make up with a very short answer.

Dharmapriya: I hope for a short answer! In your account of the 12 negative *āśā*s in this lecture and in the *Suttā*, I found it difficult to determine the actual contents of *bhava* and *jāti*. In the lecture you define *bhava* as 'coming to be', or 'the process of being conditioned by one's own limitations', and name it as the last link in the present life. In the *Suttā*, you describe *bhava* as life in, or rebirth into, any sphere of phenomenal existence, and finish your discussion by saying that the term is also taken to mean conception; for, at the tenth causal stage, i.e. the arising of *bhava*, begins the future life. That you translate as birth, and in the *Suttā* you make clear that it is not parturition but conception. Thus

we have conception, the first link in the future life, arising in *HPnpnpnp* *nnnn* rebirth or conception. last link in the

present life or first in the future life.

S: Yes. These difficulties do reflect the fact that, in the tradition itself, the meaning of the word *bhava* is quite ambiguous. I have also encountered explanations according to which *bhava* represents existence in the intermediate state. This would not be a possible explanation for a

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Theravadin, because they don't believe in the intermediate state, but it would be a possible explanation for a Sarvastivadin and, of course, for a Tibetan Buddhist. *jāti* is literally birth, but, according to Buddhist tradition, life begins with conception rather than with birth. For instance, in the case of a *bhikkhu*, you can't become a *bhikkhu* until you are 20, but your age is reckoned from your conception not from your birth, so traditionally Buddhism regards *jāti*, though it literally means birth, as in effect representing conception, because that is when your life or your 'birth' into the world, as it were, starts.

So what is the *āśā* before *bhava*?

: *Upādāna*.

S: *Upādāna*. So *upādāna* is grasping. It's clinging. So it's the grasping or the clinging that results in becoming or existence, as we would say,

which results in mundane existence or conditioned existence; but conditioned existence when? Well, clearly, immediately prior to *jāti*; so, if *jāti* means conception, then existence immediately prior to conception. Well, if you take 'prior to conception' as meaning existence in the intermediate state, it is quite clear and straightforward; but if you don't believe in that intermediate state, what is it that precedes conception? The difficulty seems to arise there.

Since the Theravadins don't believe in the intermediate state, perhaps the confusion is caused because they have got to give an explanation of bhava which is not that it is the intermediate state; so the explanation that is given, it seems, is that it sort of represents conditioning in general. That would, I think, suffice to explain the matter. Because certainly, if you adopt the Sarvastivadin point of view and the Tibetan Buddhist point of view, everything seems to fall into place more easily, doesn't it? You have a much more specific concrete meaning of the word bhava: existence in the intermediate state.

Though, of course, the Theravadin might reply that you could say that it is all that state of conditioned existence which arises subsequent to that act of clinging, right up to your birth or conception in the next existence. But that is rather general, isn't it? But even then, if you believed in the intermediate state, it would include that, too. Perhaps it requires further investigation and consultation of texts. But I seem to remember consulting various sources and finding that there were several conflicting explanations of the meaning of bhava which would suggest that there was a certain ambiguity or a certain amount of confusion, even.

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Dharmapriya: It almost suggests that the Theravadins had departed from a more correct or a more genuine understanding when they abandoned any idea of intermediate state and thereby got themselves into trouble.

S: We don't know that that belief preceded the Theravada, though again I would have to look this up. I do believe that there is a reference to a school that believed in antazabhava or intermediate state in the Kathauatthu - I think; that is to say, one of the books of the Abhidharma Pitaka. I'd have to check that down.

Dharmapriya: Do you know why the Theravadins don't accept antazabhava, or do they

S: I don't; so far as I recollect, they don't give any argument. They merely base themselves on the texts: that it is not mentioned in the texts or that according to the texts death is followed immediately by rebirth or rather, obviously, by reconception.

Ah yes, I remember another explanation, I think from Theravada sources: that bhava refers to the period of intra-uterine existence, that is to say existence in the womb.

Dharmapriya: But that would be after conception?

S: That's right. In that cases you would have to regard birth as corresponding to parturition and not conception, which would conflict with the usual way of regarding jati, or birth. On the whole, it seems it is better to regard it as representing the antazabhava - that bhava is antazabhava. That would seem to make somewhat more sense: that it is as a result of the process of clinging throughout one's life that one arises in the intermediate state.

OK, how are we going?

Abhaya: We've got seven. The next question is from Ratnaguna again on the Bahiya incident.

Ratnaguna: This is one of those questions. Just to check out the sources. In the lecture you relate the story of Bahiya and the Buddha, and you quote the Buddha as saying to Bahiya: 'In the seen only the seen, in the heard only the heard, in the tasted only the tasted, in the touched only the touched, in the thought only the thought.' So, assuming that's from the sudana, the same episode, what the Buddha actually says is: 'In the seen there will be just the seen, in the heard just the heard, in

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the imagined just the imagined, in the cognised just the cognised.' So I wonder if it is the same ....

S: It is, but I would just have to look up the Pali and see what the original terms were. The general meaning would seem to be the same. I could just observe that, in more recent years, I have been a bit doubtful about that kind of approach - that is to say, approach in terms just of awareness. Because I think if one wasn't careful, if one thought only in those terms, one could end up, possibly, with an alienated awareness. I think one would need to make it very clear that that when it was a question of 'in the seen only the seen' one wasn't thinking in terms of a cold as it were scientific objectivity to the exclusion of any subjective, i.e. emotional, element. I think one could read the incident or the teaching aqhaving that kind of meaning.

Ratnaguna: It is like in the Wisdoms of the Five Buddhas, the mirror-like wisdom comes from (s.... ?), doesn't it?

S: Yes, one could well say that; but obviously it is not the only kind of wisdom.

Ratnaguna: Yes, it's balanced by the others.

S: Yes, indeed, that's true.

Abhaya: Prakasha also has a question on the same story.

Prakasha: I was wondering why Bahiya was gored by the bull

S: On his previous karma! Doesn't the Buddha give that explanation, or is it some other incident? Because several bhikkhus were gored by bulls, usually after attaining arahantship, fortunately. It doesn't really matter then, does it? So in a way, there is no problem. (Laughter.) Well, what does it matter, if you've attained Enlightenment? Well, maybe it matters

for others, because there is the loss, so to speak, of an Enlightened person. Anyway, what was the question?

Ratnaguna: Was he gored by the bull because his Insight brought his karma to fruition? If so, is there a relationship between Insight

and the exuiation of karma?

S: Does Insight bring karma to fruition? I suppose it is karma thinking if you can personify

karma - or Mara thinking, certainly: 'Gosh, he's gained Enlightenment. If I don't get him now, I never will! I certainly never will in the next life, because there won't be one!' But I am very doubtful,

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actually, whether Insight does bring previous karmas to ripeness. One is assuming that it does that, in any case, only with respect to unskilful karmas. But what about skilful karmas that you might have committed? No, I am rather doubtful about that.

Dharmapriya: I can't remember exactly, but in one of the notes in Nyanamoli's *Elfe* of the Buddha he quotes from the Commentary saying it is the same evil spirit - I don't know what kind of <spirit,> yaksha or whatever it is - who keeps following the Buddha and whenever someone takes a great leap transforms himself into a bull and gores the person. Do you remember that?

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S: No, I don't, but it sounds very much like Mara. He is so annoyed that someone has escaped from his realm that he gets him on the level that he can, so to speak. One could look at it like that. So, when you gain Enlightenment, watch out! Not that it will really matter.

Abhaya: I have a question about the nidana of ignorance.

It occurred to me: could You see ignorance rather like a base

caltasika that you were talking about last night, as a sort of link which carries the rest throughout, rather than it being utterly independent?

S: I think we have to be careful not to think too much in terms of a chain. It is not that ignorance is there at the beginning and the sanskayas having arisen in dependence on it, and ignorance then ceases to exist. No, it continues, repeating as it were. Some translations or some writings speak of 'the nidana chain', and even the term 'link' suggests that. But it isn't really quite like that. It is as though ignorance is a sort of permanent basis all the time. The fact that the walls of the house arise in dependence on the foundation doesn't mean that once the walls have arisen the foundation ceases to exist. It is rather like that. So one could say - I don't know that tradition does say that - that ignorance is enumerated first because it is there all the time. Whether there is pain or whether there is pleasure, ignorance is underneath. Whether you grasp or don't grasp, ignorance is there underneath. When I say 'don't grasp', I mean not actually grasping at this particular moment - ignorance is there underneath. Whether you are born or whether you die, ignorance is there underneath. So pleasure is not always necessarily there, nor is pain always necessarily there; but ignorance is always necessarily there until you are Enlightened. Again, I suppose it is the sort of misunderstanding that

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arises if you take expressions like 'nidana chain' too literally.

Though again, you could imagine that first link stapled on to a rock, and the other links successively arising in dependence on it. That link is still there, holding the whole chain fast to the rock, which is mundane existence, one could say. Not that as soon as the second

link is fastened on to the first and the third on to the second, that first one ceases to be fastened to the rock, ceases to support the whole chain. It supports the whole chain. So the fact that the second nidana arises in dependence on it doesn't mean that the first nidana thereupon passes out of existence.

Abhaya: The next question is from Dharmapriya on the gap between nidanas twelve and one.

Dharmapriya: You list three junctures in the nidana process: namely,

between samskatas and upajana, between uddana and tishna, between bhava and jati.

S: Yes, this is a traditional enumeration, by the way, not peculiar to myself.

Dharmapriya: Ah! Why, however, do you not list the juncture between ja2a- ma2ana and auldy, which like the others is a change-over between karma and upaka or upaka and karma, especially in the light of the fact that Dhammanina's description of the

Path uses this point as the beginning of the Spiral process?

S: I think I would really need to draw a chart to get this clear. But throughout the nidana chain, to use that term, you get an alternation of cause process and effect process, or result process, don't you? I think it has something to do with that. I can't quite picture it. But that is my suspicion - that, in effect, you have enumerated that juncture, but in connection with a corresponding set of nidanas earlier on.

Dharmapriya: The other side of the circle, so to speak.

S: Yes, you could say that.

: Er, I've drawn a chart, Bhante, do you want to - ?

S: Yes, let's have a look. So tell me again, which ones are you asking about?

Abhaya: Between twelve and one.

S: These are not numbered.

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Dharmapriya: ya2ana2ana and auldy.

S: Ah, right. So auldy is cause process, isn't it? So auldy corresponds to - no, auldy and samska2a are cause process, so they correspond to (Voices making suggestions.) - to uddana and tishna, don't they?

: I would have thought not uddana but tishna, uddana and

bhava.

S: Yes, through the series beginning with ttishna. So therefore, auldya corresponds to ttishna, upadana and bhava. So therefore the juncture between uedana and tzishna corresponds to the juncture between ja2amazana and auldya. So in that sense it is already covered. I think that is the answer, actually. Because, in a sense, it is a circle, but when you enumerate the junctures it is as though you are dealing more with a straight line. So the juncture on one side of the circle, as it were, really corresponds to or is identical with the juncture on the other side of the circle, so they are not both enumerated in this case. I don't know whether this question is traditionally discussed, but I think this would be the answer. In other words, there is a juncture but it has not been enumerated as such, because it corresponds with the juncture opposite which has already been enumerated, so that there are three junctures and not four. I will probably give that further thought, to make sure.

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S: Yes, you could argue that a juncture should also be enumerated there, otherwise why should you not just enumerate one juncture for the whole round? Because juncture is essentially the point of transition as between action process and result process.

Dharmapriya: Though they also enumerate the two between result process and action process - at least, in that description.

S: It could be that they as it were want to confine themselves to one particular lifetime; and also if you as it were envisage the nidanas as it were lengthwise, not in a circle - maybe the illustration of the circle came later - well, you don't have a juncture in that sort of way. Perhaps that is the reason. You are only seen to need a juncture when you join the end and the beginning.

Virananda: You are suggesting that there is a juncture between a future life and a past life.

S: That's true, yes. That, I suppose, is the logical answer. Though as2in, it isn't that particular life. There is a juncture between the last link of the present life and the first of the future life, which appears in the past, of course, as the first of the present life. Probably the real reason is that originally thinking was linear, but the illustration is in the form of a circle.

Abhaya: A question from Ratnaguna on the interchangeability of uedana and duAkha.

Ratnaguna: In the lecture you say that duAkha corresponds to uedana in the cyclical nidanas. In what way do they correspond?

5: Vedana corresponds to duAkha in the sense that duAkha is a form of uedana. You could say that all duAkha is not all uedana, of course, not actually. But you could say that all uedana is duAkha potentially; so in that sense quite straightforwardly you can equate uedana and duAkha. Even though there are such things as actual pleasurable sensations, potentially they are duAkha, simply because they are transient. But in any case, if you don't take that into account, they correspond, because both represent result process as distinct from action process.



Ratnaguna: Isn't duAkha the first spiral link coming from uedana, so isn't

it karmic?

S: Ah, no; one must remember the nidanas are not individual factors but

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are pairs of factors; that the first nidana of that spiral series is not, strictly speaking, duAkha: the first nidana is that in dependence upon duAkha arises saddha. That is why I have enumerated the nidanas in the odd way I have in The Thzee gewels (Ch. 13). Do you remember? At the end of the paragraph 'In dependence on ...', and then in the next paragraph, without any full stop, 'arises such-and-such'. So, yes, maybe this is in a way a common not exactly misunderstanding but slight misapprehension, that a nidana consists of one factor. No: a nidana, strictly speaking,

consists of two factors, one arising in dependence on the other. So in dependence upon duAkha arises saddha. That arising is the first nidana; it is the arising that is the nidana, not the factor that arises or that is arisen from.

Ratnaguna: If you are going round the Wheel to uedana, could you then say 'in dependence upon uedana arises either ttishna or duAkha'?

S: Yes, you can say that.

Ratnaguna: And then 'in dependence on duAkha arises saddha'?

S: Right? yes. So the first nidana of the spiral process is the pair 'in dependence upon duAkha arises saddha'. DuAkha by itself is not the first nidana of that spiral process. Perhaps I haven't made this clear enough in the past.

Ratnaguna: So it corresponds in that 'in dependence on uedana arises tzishnaw, and the spiral correspondence is 'in dependence on duAkha arises - '

S: Faith, that's right, I have made that clear.

Dharmapriya: Is it at all relevant that, in the Wheel, 'in dependence upon uedana arises ttishna' is the change-over to the karmic process from the aka (?) process?

S: Yes, it is. That is a point that effects the usual transition.

Dharmapriya: Is it also changeover to the karmic process if you say, 'In dependence upon uedana arises duAkha, then going up the Spiral? Is that

a change-over to the - ?

S: No, you don't say 'in dependence upon uedana arises duAkha', because duAkha is a form of uedana. DuAkha is included in uedana.

Dharmapriya Aht

S: Well, isn't it?

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Dharmapriya: I think that one reason for the misunderstanding has arisen in one of the old diagrams, where the Spiral is shown geographically separate, so to speak.

S: Yes. There was actually a diagram where the Spiral Path is shown emerging at the wrong point! One of those sheets that we had in the early days. It wasn't spotted for some time, I think years, after it had been

put in circulation.

: Is that the point between craving and grasping? Because

I've heard ...

S: I think probably it was, yes.

You could say that 'in dependence upon feeling arises duAkha', using 'feeling' in the sense of the general capacity for feeling, as distinct from any actual feeling. But if you were using uedana in the sense of actual feeling, then you would have to include duAkha in that, so you couldn't strictly speaking speak of duAkha arising in dependence on uedana, as

though they were quite distinct factors. So 'in dependence upon uedana

arises craving or tzishna', you can say, or you can say that 'in dependence upon uedana, i.e. duAkha, arises faith'. When you say 'in dependence upon uedana arises tzishna', you are more likely to have in mind pleasurable feelings; but you speak in terms of 'in dependence on duAkha arises saddha', because saddha, it seems, is more likely to arise in dependence on a painful feeling than in dependence on a pleasurable one; because you ask why you are unhappy, but you never ask why you are happy. That is why I sometimes say that suffering makes you think, but happiness never makes you think. You don't think when you're happy; you become sort of infatuated, you lose your mindfulness, very often. But when you are suffering, at least you think: 'Why am I suffering? Why me? What have I done?' At least you think to that extent. Perhaps occasionally a person prone to guilt wonders why they are happy because they think they couldn't possibly have deserved to be happy! (Someone chuckles.) Oh dear, does it ring a bell for anyone? You know: 'This couldn't possibly last! Not for me! I don't deserve this! I ought to be suffering!'

Abhaya: Another question from Ratnaguna on the correlation between pannaulmuttl and s ukha-ulpassana.

Ratnaguna: When discussing the stage of freedom on the Spiral Path, you say that it consists of ceto-ulmuttl and panna-ulmuttl. In

the Suzuey you say that panna-ulmuttl is termed in the commen-  
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taries suAkha- and suddha-ulpassana, or bare Insight - that is, Insisht attained without having traversed any of the four dnyanas. What could vou sav if you wanted (... )? It seems a bit odd.

S: I am really moreand more doubtful whether there is such a thing at all as suAkha- or suddha-ulpassana in that sort of way - I mean, real ulpassana. There can be that kind of experience, but whether it is really a liberating experience in the Transcendental sense I think is extremely doubtful. The whole trend of the Teaching, and the whole trend of spiritual life, would seem to suggest that for the production of Insight or Wisdom there must be integration, and that involves or implies above all integration of the intellectual and the emotional. So I really don't see how it is possible to have any real Insight unless one has brought together within oneself the whole cognitive and the whole affective side of one's nature. One could speculate that it would be that 'pure Insight' originally meant no more than Insight which was completely dissociated from defilements, something of that sort; not from the dhyanas. But that is just guesswork. It is very curious, this notion of dry Insight, bare Insisht. It is almost as though, at some stage in the history of Buddhistsn or of the history of the Theravada, people were no longer meditating, no longer experiencing the dhyanas, but had a good knowledge of the conceptual formulae in which the (Dhazma.... ) was expressed, and mistook that understanding for Insight and thoughtthat they were really Enlightened. This is what it seems. I am always a bit suspicious when this term sokkh-vlpassnz or dry Insight is used . Whether in the Pali or the English, the term itself is a give-away: 'dry' Insight!

Ratnaguna: I can't remernber if in the lecture you go into panna-ulmuttl and ceto-ulmuttt. Have you ever done that, Bhante? - in another way of

S: I don't remember. But usually uEmuttl is used in all sorts of senses; not just in one sense. Ceto-ulmuttl would seem to refer to the experience of the whole range of the dhyanas. Though again, one can't be quite sure because again the texts and commentaries do differ quite a bit. Sut it would seem that when one speaks of ceto-ulmuttl one is not referring to ulmuttl in the sense of an experience tantamount to Nirvana, but only this is the usual explanation - to a thoroughgoing experience of all the dhyanas, both lower and higher. And there is an expression in Pali: 'liberated both ways' - that is to say, liberated by way of ceto-ulmuttl and

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also by panna-ulmutt~ in other words, one has got the full experience of dhyanas and also the liberating Insight. But I don't think I can really separate that liberating Insight at least from a measure of dhyanic experience; the dhyanas representing, of course, refined emotion.

Ratnaguna: I am not sure if I understood that. Are you saying that cetoulmuttl is usually regarded as experiencing the four dhyanas, and panna

ulmuttl as Insight?

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S: It would seem to be like that, yes. But I am saying that I find it

really quite difficult to envisage the possibility of real panna without that ceto-ulmuttl being an integral part of it. I don't see how you can

get to the point of real Insight, real panna, without the experience of the more refined emotions which the dhyana states represent. I don't see how they can be a purely cognitive Insight; Insight would seem to be the product of the union - of the blending - of the cognitive and the affective at the highest possible level.

Ruchiraketu: Would it be possible to have ceto-ulmuttl without panna-ulmuttl?

S: Yes, because the texts do enumerate those who have gained ceto-ulmuttl, those who have gained panna-ulmuttl, and those who have gained both. It would seem to me that only the liberation by way of both, the upaya-ulmuttl,

is the real ulmuttl. This is what I suppose I am saying, in technical

traditional terms. But tradition seems to treat at least two of those that is the upaya-ulmuttl and the panna-ulmuttl - as being real ulmuttis in the full transcendental sense; I am doubtful about that.

Ratnaguna: Is ceto-ulmuttl often translated as 'the heart's release'?

S: That's right, yes. The fact that it is possible to translate it as 'heart' suggests the whole emotional-affective side of one's experience.

Ratnaguna: So when we read that term 'Heart's release' in a text, it doesn't necessarily mean Insight?

S: No. Unless, of course, there was an earlier stage preceding that type of distinction. We can't be sure of that. We haven't really studied the issue properly yet: it could be that originally citta or ceto covered both the cognitive and the affective, in which case ceto-ulmuttl would in fact represent Enlightenment in the full sense. But even so that does not mean that at a later stage ceto-ulmuttl had that more specialised and more limited or restricted meaning, and as such became differentiated from panna-ulmuttl, also in a restricted sense; and that again later on perhaps

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the two were again brought together as upaya-ulmuttl. We just haven't really studied the evolution of these terms sufficiently. But leaving aside all the terms and speaking plain English, there can be no liberation or Enlightenment unless at the highest possible level one's emotional nature is united with one's intellectual nature.

Abhaya: Bhante, you referred to that combination of ceto-ulmuttl and panna-ulmuttl as full Enlightenment. Yet something we discussed a bit in our group was that after this you get another stage, which is knowledge of the destruction of the asavas. I thought that was a bit sort of supernumerary, that's going too far ... Could you have even more additions? It suggests

that

S: Well, in a way you can have a regression to infinity, a knowledge of the knowledge of the destruction of the aszavas, a knowledge of the knowledge of the knowledge of the knowledge - you see? I have dealt with this question before. I said that the division is only notional. For instance, here is the space in this room, so you could say that it is divided into the space up there 2nd the space down here; you could divide it into two, and again notionally you could divide each half into another half. And you could say that actually the space in this room consists of a number of layers of space. But it is all notional, it's all in your own mind. Actually, there is just the empty space. So in the same way, I once said, the awareness of awareness of awareness of awareness is just awareness. The distinction between awareness and awareness of awareness is all in your own mind. It is just notional. So the awareness of the awareness of the awareness of the awareness to infinity is just awareness.

So, yes, I think you can speak in terms of a knowledge of the destruction of the astavas, but I don't think, therefore, you could speak of a knowledge of the knowledge of the destruction of the astavas. It is possible theoretically - you can frame those words - but there is no actual meaning or experience corresponding to those words.

Ratnaguna: So why is it there? Why doesn't the Spiral Path just finish with liberation, vnuttl, and you live there?

S: I think it is because of the whole trend of Buddhism or, if you like, early Buddhism. That it - I won't say it just sort of stressed awareness, but that it was aware. It considered awareness important. It wasn't enough, for instance, not to have hatred in the mind, you had to know the hatred was not in the mind, to be aware of it. Otherwise, perhaps, it could creep

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in quite easily. So in the same way it is not enough, so to speak, to be Enlightened; you have to know that you are Enlightened; or rather it is a question of language - if you are Enlightened but don't know that you are Enlightened, you are not Enlightened, because Enlightenment includes that element of awareness, so that is expressed in the form of, so to speak, a separate stage. But I think I can't take it as really literally constituting a separate stage, so that first of all you are Enlightened and then you become aware that you are Enlightened. Because Enlightenment is, taking the English word literally, En-lighten-ment. What else is there to know? How can you not know that you are Enlightened? Because Enlightenment is knowledge itself, above and beyond all objects, or above and beyond the subject-object distinction. So one mustn't take that enumeration of that particular stage too literally: that, first of all, you destroy the aszavas, thereby becoming Enlightened, and then you become aware that you have done it and that you are Enlightened. Well, that process may occur, but then the earlier stage could not be then termed Enlightenment.

Ratnaguna: Is it connected with the idea of the path and the fruit in the four stages of - ?

S: Yes, this is true. But one must also say that that distinction of path and fruit in the Theravada tradition is quite a late one. It is very doubtful whether it goes back to the Buddha himself.

But perhaps one shouldn't regard that awareness as sort of superadded to the experience, but as being intrinsically a part of the experience itself. You can separate the two in thought, but I am inclined to think that in experience they are not so separated.

Dhammaloka: Bhante, would the same then apply to those things which are sometimes termed withdrawal and detachment; because detachment as a state of being un-withdrawn doesn't seem to bring something new into existence?

S: Yes, it is *ultaga* and *ntbbLda*, isn't it? Or is it the other way round?

Dhammaloka: The other way round.

S: Yes, *nibbida* and *uizaga*. Yes, *vizaga* would seem to be the process of withdrawal, and *vizaga* the state of detachment or aloofness in which you find yourself as the result of the withdrawal. So there is a sort of distinction, or some basis for the distinction.

Virananda: In our study group, when we were discussing *ceto-uinutti* and *panna-vinsEti*, a correspondence was made by Abhaya between those two and  
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the rending of the two *avazanas*, the *klesavazana* and the *jneyava2ana*. Would this be a valid correspondence to make?

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S: I don't know that it is traditionally made, but I think it is a valid correspondence, because the *klesauazana* is the veil, as Guenther translates it, of conflicting emotions. Certainly, to achieve *ceto-ummuttc*, your emotions are the opposite of conflicting; they are completely unified. In the same way, in the case of *jneyavatana*, if you develop *p2aina*, clearly all delusions, all veils, are removed. So, yes, I think one could quite legitimately say that these two pairs of terms certainly do correspond, at least up to a point.

How many questions?

Abhaya: Two more. The first one is from Ratnaguna. He has a proposed correlation of his own.

S: Good. Creative thinking.

Ratnaguna: I've got two correlations, actually. In that the stage 'knowledge and vision of things as they are' is the stage of the Stream Entrant, and *uLmuttt*, or freedom,

corresponds with the stage of the Arahant, could we then correlate

*P 9 \_ thP qtnns nf wi thdrawal* with the stage of the Once-Returner.

and the stage of dispassion with the stage of the Non-Returner?

S: I suppose you could. I think you would have to work it out in greater detail and show that it was in fact so. But it is certainly an interesting suggestion and might well be the case.

Ratnaguna: One interesting thing is that the stage of withdrawal would then correspond to the weakening of the fourth and fifth fetters, and the stage of dispassion to the breaking of them.

S: Yes. Yes, one could well pursue that and try to work it out in detail, or see whether it did work out in detail; in which case perhaps it would be justified. So you could try to do that.

R>tnnnilns! Thr senond correlation: in that the stage of 'knowledge and

vision of things as they are' corresponds to the realising of the first two levels of sunyata, could we then correlate the remaining two levels of sunyata with the remaining stages of the Spiral Path? These are perhaps two possible correlations.

S: Yes, you could try that, but you realise you are bringing into juxta\_  
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position terms from the Theravada tradition originally - though no doubt going back to the Buddha himself - and terms or classifications from what would seem to be the later Mahayana developments. But one could try it.

Ratnaguna: Do you think it is just a matter of

S: You are concerned with the Transcendental; all those levels are Transcendental. So, inasmuch as these various distinctions are made within the whole series of Transcendental experiences, there must be some relation between them. It may not be a relationship of point-by-point correlation, because the terms or stages in one case may be marked off in accordance with a different principle from those in the other series. Do you see what I mean? If you take the Transcendental nidanas, they seem to be marked off in accordance with psychological principles, whereas in the case of the different levels of sunyata, they seem to be marked off in accordance with certain logical or even metaphysical subdivisions, so that though there must be some correspondence they are not necessarily point to point. You might find that the corresponding point in the other path or way or series hasn't actually got a term; that the corresponding point is between two points which have been enumerated in the other classification.

Ratnaguna: Presumably, though, sunyata must correspond to the state of ulmuttl, because

S: Yes, assuming, of course, that the path as represented by the positive nidanas in fact corresponds to the path as represented by those twelve <four?> levels of sunyata. I think one can assume that. But it is an assumption. From a traditional point of view, perhaps the Theravadins wouldn't agree and neither would the Mahayanists agree. The Mahayanists might think that they went far beyond anything in the Hinayana teachings.

I think it is quite interesting to make these correlations, and I think one should make them. But one must be quite sure that they are not just fanciful, or based on superficial resemblances. For instance, if you got two descriptions of the Path, each of which is divided into four stages, that certainly does not mean that those four stages, as such, correspond. Because, in the case of the two paths, the principle of subdivision may be quite different in each case. But, yes, it is quite interesting and worth while to try to establish a correlation, because you thereby unify the teaching better. So it is a sort of Abhidharma-type activity, you

might say. It is a means of synthesising. Abhaya: We've got time for just one more question from Suvajra about the  
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formula for conditioned co-production.

Suvajra: You speak in this lecture of the formula for conditioned co-Production as being the heart of Buddhist teaching, and you also give it quite an important place

S: Yes, as conceptually formulated.

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Suvajra: As conceptually formulated. You also give it a very important place within your Suvaey of BuddhEstn, and mention that the verse 'This being, that becomes, from the arising of this, that arises; this not becoming, that does not become; from

the ceasing of this, that ceases' - you mention that that verse, along with a second verse, 'The Tathagata has explained the origin of those things which proceed from a cause. Their cessation

too He has explained. This is the doctrine of the great Sramana,'

- those two verses have been enshrined within all Buddhist traditions at all times. It doesn't seem that we do quite the same in our own tradition of Buddhism~ so far; that we

haven't given it the same sort of place.

S: Yes, that is a quite interesting point. Though in a way we do, because this principle runs through the whole of the FWBO teaching, doesn't it? because we are always talking about the Round and the Spiral and the Mandala. It is as though we don't have the bare bones, but we have the flesh and the blood, therefore the whole body that is built on the bones, but we don't expose the bones separately - you could say.

Suvajra: Do you think we should expose the bones separately?

S: Well, perhaps we should sometimes, on suitable occasions! Not in front of young people and beginners, because it might put them off! The bones might look just like bones. But doctors don't mind looking at bones; they find bones quite attractive, even quite beautiful, and they are not put off.

So perhaps there is a place for some such recitation within, say, the Sevenfold Puja - when there are only Order Members present. You could - this just occurs to me at the moment - you could, for instance, recite those particular very brief formulations and then recite the mundane nLdanas and then the whole series of the Transcendental nLdanas. You could do that. You would be passing from the less detailed to the more detailed, or from the more abstract to the less abstract, the more concrete.

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It certainly would provide a useful reminder.

: Do that in the same place as the Heart Sutra, in addition

S: That's right, one could do that, certainly. Before the Heart Sutra, perhaps. It is because B arises in dependence upon A that B has no self-nature; it is a conditioned thing. And because it has no self-nature, because it is a conditioned thing, it is void. It is sunyata. So the Heart Sutra would come in very nicely there. For instance, you have the Entreaty and Supplication; you are entreating the Buddhas to teach. So then you could have that verse: the arising of those things which are arisen by way of a cause ? and also their ceasing when the cause ceases one could add, 'That is the teaching of the Great Sramana'; and then the nLdanas and then the Heart Sutra. You could certainly do that. I don't know how you'd do it, whether call and response or in some other way. Perhaps you could chant them together. Or perhaps you could just have someone reading that verse, and then you all chant together the nLdanas. You could experiment in various ways when just Order Members are present, and report the results of your experimentation in the pages of Shabda.

: Would you suggest chanting in Pali?

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S: I hadn't thought about that. I don't know; I have an open mind about that. It is something you could experiment with. It is easier to chant in Pali, isn't it? (Chanting): Auidya pasya(?) scnskaz~n; synskaza pasya utinany. You could chant like that. That is how they do chant, only better than that! But you can't so easily chant: 'In dependence on ignorance arise the formations'! Well, you could. It sounds quite gregorian doesn't it?

Is that the lot?

Abhaya: That's the lot, I think.

Ratnaguna: Do you mind if I make two more points, or is it late? In one of my earlier questions I realised afterwards that I hadn't quite asked it properly, so I didn't get the point across. When we were talking about the white segment in the Wheel of Life, you mentioned it as being conventional religion, and you said that one shouldn't take that too literally. What we were discussing in our group was: can conventional religion take you as far as the dhyanas?

S: I think it's a case entirely of what you mean by conventional religion.

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You can take conventional religion in two senses: either the faithful following of a particular path, especially in matters of externals, without understanding very much about why you are following it, or the purpose of the following; or you can take conventional religion in the sense of a purely hypocritical, insincere keeping up of the externals of religion for, for instance, social reasons and so on. So certainly, if you take conventional religion in the second sense, it certainly wouldn't carry you up to the dhyanas. In the first sense, perhaps, it would. It would be difficult to say categorically that it wouldn't. It would certainly have some,

let's say, purifying effect on the mind, some stabilising effect on the character. So that would certainly take you to a measure of integration and possibly to some mild dhyanic experience. It certainly wouldn't rule that out. But, taking conventional religion in the second sense, it is certainly to be ruled out. What was the other point?

Ratnaguna: You mentioned a paper called 'Philosophy and Religion in Driginal and Developed Buddhism' by yourself. Is that available?

S: Yes, it came out some time ago as a Dhamramrgha. I don't know whether it is actually there; it might be. : What is it called?

Abhaya: 'Buddhism as Philosophy and Religion'.

S: Yes, that's right, that's the shortened title.  
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### DAY THREE

Abhaya: We have 21 questions arising out of this lecture, 'Depth Psychology of the Yogachara'. The first question is from myself: In the Sutuey you refer to the Vijnanavada doctrine of the existence of phenomena as indistinguishable from our perception of them, and relate this to Berkeley's idealism. The question is: in what sense, if at all, do you think that phenomena exist independently of your perception?

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S: The statement that phenomena don't exist independently of our perception of them can, of course, be misunderstood. If it is misunderstood, of course, it amounts to solipsism, though it has been said, I believe, by some modern thinker, that solipsism is logically irrefutable - but anyway, that's another matter. So when one says that phenomena do not exist apart from one's perception of them, and that esse est percipere, as Berkeley says, what does that really mean? In a way, it is quite simple. One can say: here you are experiencing things, but do you have any experience of things apart from your experience of them? How can you know things - or how is it that you can know things, to change the terminology slightly - independently of your knowing them? So really you can't get out of your own perceiving mind, not so long as one recognises that subject-object duality. This is all that one is really saying; it seems, in a way, obvious. I don't think really that Berkeley says anything more than that. So this would seem to suggest that the so-called subject and the so-called object are really bound up with one another. You may be able to at least conceive an object without a subject - for instance, you can conceive of the sun existing before human beings came into existence - but can you actually think of an object existing without a subject? Not really, because when you think of it as existing without a subject, there are you, the subject, thinking of it. You could say you are only thinking of the thought of it; but can you perceive the thing itself independently of your thought of it? This requires perhaps a little reflection.

So perhaps - I am being a bit tentative here - what it really points to is simply the fact that subject and object are correlative; that you can't really eliminate the object without eliminating the subject, or vice versa; and, when you do that, according to the Yogachara, what you have left, so to speak, is the undifferentiated citta - that is to say, CLta

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with a capital C. So I suppose the short answer is that, in looking at the matter in the way in which I have just done, I do personally think that esse is pezcLp~.

: What does that mean in English?

5: Esse is to exist, pezcLpe2e is to perceive. Berkeley uses the phrase: to exist is to be perceived. Perhaps that formulation is a bit misleading. Perhaps one should simply say that you cannot in fact perceive a thing independently of your perception of it and just leave it at that.

It is one of the things I have promised myself to find time to think about more, some day; perhaps even to go through the Lankavatara Sutra systematically, perhaps even reread Berkeley. Only a few days ago I was thinking I must reread his Sizgus - partly because of its neoplatonic connections.

Has anybody ever read any work by Berkeley?

: Uust a bit.

S: His writings are, actually, among the most readable of all writings on philosophy. Among the great philosophers probably there are only three or four who are really readable: Plato, obviously, is one. Descartes is very readable, though not in a very exciting way. Schopenhauer, of course, is very readable indeed. And Berkeley is very readable; he had a beautiful English style. You could say that his Dialogues of Hylas and Philonous, which give a simple account of his system, certainly his earlier system, are really classics of literature as well as of philosophy; they are so readable and the scene is so beautifully set, just in the style of Plato. So he certainly is one of the most accessible philosophers in that way.

If anyone just wants to get a general idea of his system, just read those three Dialogues of Hylas and Philonous. The name Hylas actually means Matter in Greek, and Philonous means lover of mind or nous. So Hylas represents the materialist position and Philonous represents the immaterialist position.

Abhaya: The next question is from Ratnaguna on absolute idealism and extreme views.

Ratnaguna: It is actually subjective idealism and extreme views.  
In the lecture you say that, epistemologically speaking, the  
Yoaachara denies the existence of any external objects; all

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are ideas. (That is a paraphrase of what you said.) Isn't

this an extreme view?

S: Well, what does one mean by an extreme view? I remember I was once asked a question along these lines. Someone asked me: according to Buddhism, should we be truthful? I said, Yes, of course. So they then said: Well, isn't speaking the truth one extreme and telling lies

the other? I wasn't caught out! I said, Well, no; one extreme is to exaggerate and the other

is to minimise, and to speak the truth is following the Middle Path between those two extremes... (few words inaudible). So you could say it is a bit like that; you can probably transfer the principle of that answer to your question.

Ratnaguna: In that we are trying to break down the subject-object dichotomy, what this seems to me to say is that there is only subject.

S: If you say that there is only subject and therefore deny the object, this is of course extreme. But in denying the existence of the object and affirming the existence of the subject, what in fact are you doing? You cannot affirm the existence of the subject without making it an object, and you yourself becoming the subject. So you have not, in fact, in effect, denied the existence of the object. You may think you have done so, because, as I said earlier, where there is a subject there is an object, and where there is an object there is a subject. So it is not a question either of reducing subject to object, which you could describe as materialism of one kind or another, or of reducing object to subject, which is as though the object is unreal and only the subject is real. As I said, you always have both of them together, so that the real Middle Way is to get rid of both. But sometimes subjective idealism, if that is the right term to use, does sound as though it is denying the object in the interests of the subject.

But the position actually is that you cannot perceive an object - and it is admitted that there is an object - independently of your perception of it. In other words, in your perception there is an element which cannot in fact be reduced to you as a subject. This is what we call zupa in Buddhism. I think I have gone into that somewhere, haven't I? - that the zupa is - (Voices prompting) - the objective content of the perceptual situation. Because in your experience of the world, you find, for instance, that there is something that isn't under your control. There is something that resists your control with regard to the so-called material world; this is what

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we c211 zupa. But you never perceive this zupa independently of yourself perceiving it, so in that sense the two, the so-called subject and the so-called object, go together. In fact, I don't think one can really ultimately even speak of a separate object and a separate subject. I think I have mentioned this before. It is as though there is just experience, and in that experience you can as it were differentiate the subjective pole, as I have called it, and the objective pole.

Ratnaguna: Do you think the phrase 'The Yogachara denies the existence of any external object' .... ?

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S: That can be misunderstood, clearly. It denies the existence of an external object - no, perhaps even that is not the best way of putting it; it denies that you can perceive anything which you do not perceive. That is the best one can say.

Ratnaguna: It sounds a bit tautologous.

S: Well, perhaps it is. Perhaps it is best to think in terms of the field, so-called, the perceptual field or experiential field, with these two poles, one objective, the other subjective; not as two things as it were, standing face to face with a sort of gap in between them. That is the way we usually think of subject and object, isn't it? For instance, as I sit here I have a perception, don't I? And that perception takes in so many things. It takes in the room, it takes in the books, it takes in the walls, it takes in all of your bodies; it takes in all those things. So that is the object of my perception. But can I really as subject remove myself from that and have that perception without myself being there? That perception is my perception; it can't really be separated from me. Berkeley's argument, of course, goes by Locke's distinction, doesn't it, between primary and secondary qualities of matter? - that we know that the secondary qualities of matter don't really exist objectively, so to speak. <That is> not to say they don't exist at all, but simply that they are not what we think they are. For instance, colour: colour doesn't exist in things, things aren't coloured; colour is simply a form of the way in which we perceive them. Different people can even perceive things as differently coloured. That is not to say that there is not an objective content in the perceptual situation, but only that the perceptual situation, as you perceive it, cannot really be held to exist apart from your actual perception of it, so that subject and object are always correlative.

Dharmapriya: But is this actually the Yogachara position? I had understood,  
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both from the Sutuey and the lecture, that the Yogachara actually went further and said, 'No, there is no objective content to the perceptual situation.'

S: The procedure of the Yogacharins is a bit different from Berkeley's. They rely more on the analogy of dreams, don't they? Just as in dreams you have an experience of trees and houses and people, and when you wake up they are just not there; it is, so to speak, purely subjective. But even when you deny the existence of something why is there any need to deny its existence? You can only think of denying the existence of something if in some sense it does exist, even if it only exists as a false perception; even a false perception, as a false perception, does really exist. So again, you can't really divorce something of some kind of objective nature though

- not an object standing by itself - completely from the subject; though, again, not a subject which can possibly stand by itself. So where does that leave the Yogachara, do you think?

Dharmapriya: It leaves me slightly confused!

Ratnaguna: I was wondering if the Yogachara went to a bit of an extreme as a method - methodologically - because we quite naturally think in terms of objects 'out there'. I wondered if they went to the other extreme to sort of

S: I think that is a possibility, but they certainly did end up, so to speak, as a sort of philosophy, purporting to reveal in conceptual terms the truth of things, so to speak. There is also the point that if you want to transcend the subject-object duality you are as it were closer to the subjective pole, and you therefore work more on that, so perhaps that comes to be more emphasised. You work on that, so to speak, when you meditate. You change your subjective perception, and therefore you change, apparently, what you perceive.

So perhaps in a way the difficulty is semantic, because we speak of what you perceive as though there was a 'what' apart from the perception; whereas according to Berkeley and the Yogachara, there isn't. Berkeley makes the point that he doesn't deny that you have actual perceptions. He only denies that there is a material substratum quite separate from those perceptions. So, in a sense, Berkeley and the Yogacharins do not deny that there is an object. They only deny that there is an object separate from the subject. Perhaps one could put it like that.

It is really like the obverse and reverse of a coin, or the inside  
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and the outside of a box: that they are distinct, and you can think of them separately, but you can't really have one without the other. So subjective idealism, wrongly understood, appears to mean that you can have the inside of the box without the outside, or the obverse of the coin without the reverse. So Berkeley might say, using this language, 'I am not saying that there is no reverse to the coin; I am only saying that the reverse doesn't exist apart from the obverse.' - in other words, that in a sense the two are the same thing, inasmuch as they are inseparable. That seems to be a commonsense way of putting it, but it probably doesn't do justice to the full subtlety either of Berkeley's thought or the Yogachara's.

It is a very mysterious thing, if you reflect upon perception. I don't know if anybody has ever done this? You should try it some time as a sort of exercise, or experiment, if you like; just sit down quietly and experience yourself and be aware of yourself as perceiving, and be aware of the content of your experience, whatever it happens to be - your room or the countryside - and ask yourself 'What is actually happening? What is actually taking place?' Berkeley is constantly emphasising this. He constantly says: 'Refer to your own experience. Ask yourself what is happening in your own experience.' This is one of his quite distinctive emphases.

Ratnaguna: Is that a bit like something you said on another occasion, that when you split things up you've got a problem how to put them back together again?

S: Yes, it's a little like that. If you split subject and object, there is the problem of how to put them back again. So you can certainly distinguish them in thought, but you can't really separate them.

: So, in a sense, could one say that the fact that we know we perceive is proof that there is a connection between subject and object, that the two can't be completely separated?

S: Right, yes.

Mahamati: Does the Yogachara find some way of explaining why it is that so-called objective reality appears to correspond, to be similar, for different people?

S: I don't remember that this is discussed. It might be, but I don't know the connection of that.

Mahamati: Because that is the thing that bothers me about saying that  
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the objective world is dependent upon the subject; because it might not be there for oneself, but for other people it is.

S: Then you might say, 'Who are these other people?'

Mahamati: Well, yes. I wondered whether there actually was an explanation for that.

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S: I mean there are other people but one mustn't think of those other people as objects, completely separate from you as subject. This is again one of the things that one can reflect on; just think: here I am, just sitting with a certain perception, and that perception has a certain content. Well, part of that content is bodies of people, and I can also perceive my own body. So I can therefore as it were assume that, just as there is a consciousness associated with my body, so presumably there is a consciousness which is not my consciousness associated with those bodies.

But, of course, I never actually perceive that consciousness, do I? Well, in a way I don't even perceive my own consciousness, actually. Because when I perceive what I call my consciousness, it ceases to be me, it ceases to be subject, it becomes object. You can't ever actually perceive the subject. The Buddha and Ananda go into all this in the Suzangama Sut2a, don't they?

So these are things to ponder on. I think that a lot of the difficulty arises just on account of the fact that we have reflexive consciousness. In some ways the questions and their answers are a product of alienation. Maybe that requires reflection, too. But if you reflect on these matters sufficiently, you will get a very odd sensation, and then you have to follow that sensation; and that can lead to a sort of Insight. Because really what happens is you start not exactly questioning, it's more than questioning, but you start somehow seeing or even experiencing the limitations of your commonsense 'here am I, the subject, perceiving an object out there' sort of attitude.

Abhaya: Prakasha has a question on Berkeley's theory and the Yogachara. Do you feel that still stands, Prakasha?

Prakasha: Yes. Berkeley was ridiculed at the time, but how does modern Western thought regard Berkeley's philosophy and subjective

idealism in general?

S: I don't find it easy to say, because one would need to be quite well up in modern philosophy and historians of philosophy and writers of articles  
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in philosophical journals. If one reads these somewhat older textbooks, one gets the impression that Berkeley is rather dismissed; he is not fundamentally taken seriously. But I believe there are signs more recently of a sort of reassessment of Berkeley. But I can't really

say how far that has gone; I am not sufficiently in touch with the circles that are concerned with these things. But it does seem that, at least in some quarters, there is to some extent a reassessment of Berkeley going on.

There is a Penguin book on Berkeley. I didn't find it a particularly good book when I read it years ago. It seemed unnecessarily difficult in a way. Berkeley himself is so readable there seems to be no reason why one shouldn't read Berkeley himself. He also seems to have been a quite attractive character, unlike some philosophers. He was, of course, a devout Christian, but a very amiable character indeed, and highly regarded by all his friends and acquaintances. In fact, he seems to have been almost a saintly character, one might say, which is perhaps not without significance. I mean you could hardly describe Schopenhauer as a saintly character, or even Kant. Kant was a reclusive and scholarly, and even ascetic, character, but hardly saintly. Spinoza is often described as a saintly character. Anyway, that's all by the way.

Ratnaguna: It strikes me that whenever I have had conversations like this with other people about subjective idealism and so on, I and others quite often do have a funny sort of experience. And I wonder if this might be a sort of a bit nearer to us for developing Insight than more traditional Buddhist <methods>.

S: It is not impossible, because after all it is not unlike the Zen exchanges, where the Zen master bemuses the disciple. Maybe that is a good descriptive word: it's a sort of bemusement. It could well be that something could be developed along those lines, possibly by going through a text of this type, maybe a chapter of the Lankavatara, maybe a few paragraphs of Berkeley. It is certainly not impossible; perhaps it's something that should be followed up. One perhaps comes to realise that one's mind is not as well equipped to grasp the nature of Reality - maybe reality even just with a small r - as one had supposed. One starts doubting the capacity of the instrument, at least for certain purposes. Someone did write something to this effect, that the human intellect has essentially the same function as the pig's snout, and is therefore not a very suitable instrument for the exploration of Ultimate Reality!

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: Do you remember who said that, Bhante?

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S: I can't, I'm afraid. I think it was a modern author. But sometimes we have a naive confidence in our ability to understand - which doesn't mean our personal ability, but the ability of the mind itself to understand. It is not that if we had a better mind we could understand better. It is more that the mind as such can't understand, not in the spiritual sense. If you consider, you can read books on Buddhism written by scholars <in which> there are lengthy discussions of Nirvana and what is Nirvana, and

though they might mention that Nirvana is of course <inaccessible to> reason, it doesn't even occur to them that it might actually be beyond their reason; they go on discussing the subject as though their minds were fully competent to understand what Nirvana actually was, or what the Buddha really meant by the term. They are completely unaware of the inability of their minds at least, of the ordinary mind - to grasp such matters.



This ties up with what Coleridge says about if you think you understand

something, you in a sense place that thing beneath you; you look down upon something which you can understand, because you have comprehended it, you are greater than it, hence there is no reverence; so how can such scholars feel reverence for Nirvana when they assume that they have fully understood it? They are not able to think of it or experience it as something above them. So this is sometimes the impression you get from such writings, of utter arrogance, blind arrogance. Again, one shouldn't use that fact in an obscurantist way - I mean, understand as much as you can, with your present mind - but in the end recognise that for certain purposes it isn't completely equipped.

Goethe says something to this effect, doesn't he? I think I have quoted it before. I think he says something like (I haven't got him quite right, I know): 'Know what can be known, and then rest in reverence of the unknowable' - words to that effect, roughly.

Abhaya: The next question is from myself. It is really asking your opinion about a book which I've been looking into, called *The Yogachara Ideals* by Chatterjee. I have come across the following statement in that book: 'The

Yogachara declines the notion of objectivity but the subjective becomes ontological; it really exists, while the objective does not.' I take it that this is a misrepresentation of the

Yogachara position, and if so, what do you think of the rest

of the book?

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S: I have read the book. It is by an academic. He does base himself on texts, so it is a useful book, but it is doubtful whether he has much real understanding of the system. This is not to say that one shouldn't make use of the book. But what does he actually say here? Say that again.

Abhaya: He says: 'The Yogachara declines the notion of objectivity, but the subjective becomes ontological; it really exists, while the objective does not.'

S: Well, yes and no. This is a curious mixture of right and wrong, as it were. CIta does become ontologically existent, one could say, though I am sure that there is some Yogachara text which says that it is neither existent nor non-existent. But it is treated, let us say, as though it is ontologically existent. But that same CIta, surely, is conceived by the Yogachara as transcending the subject-object duality. Because, after all, the *klistodnano-ujnana* is just that type of perception. In the *alaya*, especially the absolute *alaya*, there is no *klistodnano-ujnana*, and therefore no discrimination of subject and object. So you can you therefore at or from that level speak of a CIta as real object as distinct from unreal subject? I suppose you could say there is a sort of procedure whereby you dissolve or try to dissolve the object in the subject; but the subject which you then have is neither subject nor object. So Chatterjee is in a way right and in a way wrong. Perhaps he is just being a bit too literal-minded. Do you see what I mean?

Abhaya: Yes. So you think the book is useful for ...?

S: I think it is useful, yes, because he does base himself very much on texts. So perhaps one can understand, in the case of a book of that sort, sometimes a bit more than the author himself understands. I believe we have got two or three more books on the Yogachara in the Library now. We have got the Collected Writings of Vasubandhu, for instance.

Abhaya: Surata has the next question.

Surata: Prakasha has a question on how modern Western thought views subjective idealism.

S: No, we had that, didn't we? (Voices agreeing.)

Surata: OK; Tejmitra has a question on transpersonal elements in the relative alaya.

Tejmitra: In the lecture you say that the relative alaya is not unlike  
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the collective unconscious. My understanding of the collective unconscious is that its contents are common to groups of individuals, whereas the relative alaya's contents are made up of impressions from the past life or lives of the individual. So in what way are the two similar?

S: I suppose they are similar in the sense that they are sort of repositories. I think - I won't be completely certain of this - that there has been some discussion, at least among Western expositors of the Yogachara, as to whether the alaya is individual or collective. There would seem to be some ambiguity as far as I recollect.

Tejmitra: Well, in the sense that we have kind of common experiences, I suppose it would be collective, wouldn't it?

S: I think this is the basis of Jung's conception of the collective unconscious - that we have certain archetypes in common, and the collective unconscious is the place, so to speak, where all these archetypes of the unconscious, that is the collective unconscious, exist. It would seem that, in the case of the relative alaya, it isn't so clearly stated, to say the least, that the contents are common to a number of individuals. The language is ambiguous, to say the least, and therefore, as far as I recollect, there has been this discussion as to whether the relative alaya is individual or collective. It could perhaps be conceived of as different for each individual, as though each individual had his or her own relative alaya; but though it is possible to look at it like that it is not as clear cut. So this is why I think I introduce this element of doubt that there is some resemblance between the notions of the collective unconscious and of relative alaya. I am just trying to give people some sort of idea about it, but the common feature is definitely that both are repositories, and make possible continuity - in the case of the relative alaya between your past and present experience; in the case of the collective unconscious, between the experiences of different people or groups of people. This is, I suppose, one of those things that need to be looked further into.

Supposing that each individual has his or her own separate relative alaya, you could still raise the question of what is the relation between those separate alayas. It could be that

they do overlap, so you could end up even saying, well, there is a sort of collective relative alaya, but that not each individual alaya is conterminous with the whole of the relative alaya, something like that; in which case it would approximate

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more to Jung's conception of the collective unconscious, at least in some respects.

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I must say that, with regard to all this sort of material, where I can't consult my own experience I am very much relying on recollections of things I read 15, 20 and more years ago. There is no doubt that quite a lot of things I need to read again; perhaps even Jung. I haven't read Jung for many, many years.

Ratnaguna: I think you said on a previous occasion that the concept of the alaya was positive, as a way of explaining where one's previous karma or

S: Yes, this is one explanation. I don't think I put this forward as my own explanation, but as an explanation that had been offered. Looked at in that way, it is an artificial solution to an artificial problem, one could say. It is not quite the same as 'Where do the flies go in the wintertime?', if you see what I mean. The usual example given is, suppose you clap your hands; so when I clap my hands, you hear the sound. When I am not clapping my hands, where has the sound gone? Where is it? So when I clap my hands again, it has come back, from wherever it was! So you could invent or posit a realm where the sound remained in the intervals between my claps. But, you know, a lot of philosophy is just this sort of positing and discussion.

Abhaya: Shall we move on?

S: Yes, please!

Abhaya: The next question is Prakasha on your sketchy treatment of the relative alaya.

S: It was only one poor little lecture! I tried to cover: an enormous area. I am quite happy if Prakasna decides to specialise in the relative alaya, especially if he combines it with the study of the collective unconscious! I am quite willing to hand over that whole domain to him.

Prakasha: I have a feeling this has already been answered, but I'll ask

it anyway.

What is said about the relative alaya is very sketchy. How much further has the Yogachara gone in developing a fuller description? I was wondering why the whole level of archetypes seems to be absent.

S: Archetypes, hm. I have been thinking for the last two or three years

quite seriously about this question of archetypes, for want of a better term, in Buddhism. In early Buddhism and, formerly, even in later Buddhism, you get not only the descriptions of the dhyanas but even of their corresponding worlds or realms. There are many references to the beings, the devas, inhabiting these realms, which you could regard as being archetypal figures. Then, of course, in the Mahayana, the devas, one could say very roughly, are sort of transformed into Bodhisattvas, and these Bodhisattvas make up or are part of the Sambhogakaya. So one could regard the collective unconscious, in a higher sense, as being covered by them. But so far as the relative alaya is concerned, I don't know that the connection with that area is actually explicitly made. I think this is something that perhaps remains to be investigated. Though it is interesting that - I do mention this in the lecture - the origins of the Yogachara are attributed to Asanga's ascent to the Tushita deva-loka, where he is instructed by Maitreya the Bodhisattva. I suspect that there can be a division even within the relative alaya. I believe that somebody - it might have been Ken Wilber - has introduced a distinction within the collective unconscious, and therefore a distinction with regard to the archetypes of the collective unconscious. I think if it is, and if I am remembering him rightly, he would regard say quite crude and primitive figures as occupying the lower reaches of the collective unconscious, and more purely spiritual figures as occupying the higher reaches. So I think we could certainly look at the relative alaya in this way.

We could even perhaps - this is very tentative - imagine three bands or strata: the first made up of predominantly individual archetypes, the middle band made up of archetypes of the collective unconscious in the more Jungian sense, and the third, the highest band, as made up of Bodhisattvas of various kinds. There is that range of experience, undoubtedly, however one treats it or describes it. But exactly what bearing that has on the relative alaya as we traditionally know it, or whether any of the ancient teachers went into these matters, I am not sure. I would have to reread the literature. As I indicated the other day, among the Yogacharins themselves there are many different interpretations of the relative alaya, as the relative rather than the absolute.

Suvajra: This level of the Bodhisattvas, the archetypes in that band is that the level for which you coined the phrase 'the collective superconscious'?

S: It could be. I'd forgotten that term, but I think I must have been

referring to that, yes.

Of course, another thing that one could reflect upon - this is backtracking a bit - is just consciousness itself. What is consciousness? Here you sit, as it were, and you are conscious. What is happening? What is consciousness? Usually consciousness is considered as analogous to light. Perhaps there is a real analogy between the two, a real correspondence. Because light can cease to exist, it can be replaced by darkness. In the same way consciousness can be eclipsed, as it is when you are in a state of deep sleep. What is this

consciousness? How does it appear to be spread as it were over objects? How is it that consciousness is capable of going round corners? - that you can think of things that you can't actually perceive, you can be conscious of them without perceiving them? I can be conscious of someone in another part of the world, another part of the solar system, though I don't actually perceive them. So what is this consciousness? What difference is there between consciousness and thought? You can have consciousness without thought but you can't have thought without consciousness. So what is this mysterious consciousness? One can reflect on this too. I don't think you'll get quite the same feeling of bemusedness, but it is an interesting subject.

Abhaya: Prakasha, you had a question on Jung's collective unconscious and the relative alaya. Do you feel that's been dealt with, or not?

Prakasha: No, I've still got a question. I was thinking about the difference between the alaya and Jung's collective unconscious. It seems to me that there is no metaphysical basis to Jung's collective unconscious.

S: Well, he explicitly repudiated that, didn't he?

Prakasha: Yes. I was thinking, though, that Jung says the collective unconscious is infinite so is there any reason why it should

not include superconscious and transcendental states?

S: I wonder what he meant by infinite. Perhaps he meant infinite only on that particular level, so to speak. One would have to see the context of that statement. But it does seem to be a quite interesting and possibly fruitful field for comparison between Jung's collective unconscious - not that he defines it very precisely; in fact I think he deliberately avoids doing that - and the relative alaya. I think we also have to be quite careful to keep close to the texts where we have texts, and try to ascertain

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what the traditional Yogachara actually has to say, and make sure that we have assembled all the relative statements and perhaps drawn a few generalisations from them before we start comparing with Jung's conception of the collective unconscious. Otherwise we will end up just comparing Jung's collective unconscious with some hazy general notion of the relative alaya and that isn't really enough.

Prakasha: Is the Transcendental necessarily excluded from, say, a psychological conception of the unconscious?

S: Well, what does one mean by a psychological conception? I think Jung was always very careful to say he was a scientist and a psychologist, and he was very careful, for instance, to speak of 'the God image', not 'God'. He was very careful to say that he was not saying that someone, for instance, had an experience of God, but that they had an experience of a God image and that it was a psychic image, and he was not prepared to say whether it actually corresponded to anything in reality. So he seems at least formally

to have remained very firmly within the limits of psychology, quite deliberately, perhaps to

avoid coming into conflict with orthodox Christianity and the churches. Though it may be that sometimes one cannot quite take him at his word.

Abhaya: The next question is from Tejananda on the reflection of the alaya as the real self.

Tejananda: In the lecture you say that the alaya-manas (7~ inana faces,

as it were, two ways: down, so to speak, to the senses, and

up to the alaya. In the case of the alaya, you say that the alaya-manas receives or somehow apprehends a reflection

of the alaya which it interprets as a separate real self.

Could you perhaps explain in more experiential terms what is going on here? For instance, what would the nature of one's experience of that reflection perhaps be?

S: The comparison is a traditional one; of course, it is metaphorical. When you have to fall back on metaphorical explanations, as Plato sometimes does, it suggests that it is not really possible, or at least not very easy, to explain what is meant in purely abstract conceptual terms. According to the Mahayana at least - even according to at least a few verses in the Pali Canon - there is a level - again, in metaphorical language - in the human being, of which we are not normally conscious, and with which we

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are not normally in contact. The Pali Canon even speaks of the pure alaya-jnana, which is obscured by adventitious defilements. Some Mahayana sutras speak of the Buddha-nature which is within and is covered over. I have spoken sometimes before in terms of where there is a reflection, that which is reflected is upside down, so that, if a mountain is reflected in a lake, and you look into the lake, the peak of the mountain appears to be deepest in the lake. So it is in that way, you might say, that there is a reflection - in this case, let us say, of the alaya - in us. The alaya, one might say, represents the highest level, but it is the lowest or deepest in us in the sense that it is the most hidden and the most obscured, there are many layers on top of it. So one might think of the self <might be seen> as being that sort of reflection. You have got a very, very obscure perceptual experience within yourself of that alaya, but you sort of experience it as the core of your being, deep down there, instead of experiencing it actually as what is up there, and not you in the limited sense at all. One can't perhaps put it more clearly than that.

: It could just be an intuition.

S: Yes, one could say that. Because again, to go back to the way in which I was talking before, you can reflect not only on perception, not only on consciousness, but on the experience of I-ness. Because the experience of I-ness is a very strange thing. You can at least have a sort of feeling of I-ness as being detached from you. We sometimes speak of the experience of I-ness as though it was entirely negative and just a question of ego, but it is also possible to look at it in another way, because - this is

in some ways more Vedantic, but let's not be afraid of that - you can detach the feelins of I-ness from the body - well, that's obvious - you can detach the feeling of I-ness from the feelings, from the mind. But then comes the crucial stage: you can detach the experience of I-ness from the 'I' itself (if you see what I mean; don't take this too literally), or from what you normally think of as the 'I', your so-called individual identity. So you can have an experience of I-ness which is not the experience of anybody in particular. So you can regard this experience of I-ness, which is not anybody's in particular, as the alaya. 3because if you reflect upon this experience of I-ness, it has a quality that nothing else has. It is completely real; there's nothing more real than the experience of I-ness. But supposing you detach that experience of I-ness from 811 the things that I have said you could detach it from, then you have, if not an experience of Absolute Reality, let us say, at least a very, very real

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experience, far transcending the ordinary limitations of I-ness. It has all the intensity of the experience of I-ness, but without its limitations; therefore it must be avery, very much more intense experience of I-ness.

So you can start reflecting as it were by just sitting quietly and experiencing your own I-ness, and then detaching that I-ness experience from any particular adjunct, let us say - upadh~ would be the technical word.

Dharmapriya: Why did you say that this procedure was 'almost Vedantic'? Would it have been Vedantic if you had said 'atman' instead of 'alaya', that step?

S: One could put it like that, though I wasn't thinking quite in that way. But certainly in the Advaita Vedanta, in the works of Sankara, this is given as a regular procedure - that 'I am not the body, I am not the senses, I am not the emotions, I am not the mind', etc.; but they don't go so far as to say that 'I am not the I'! But the general principle at least, the general thrust of experience - is the same. I don't think one need hesitate to say that.

Kulamitra(?): Is that general thrust - and that kind of image, of reflection, that you are talking about - also bound up with why there isn't in experiential terms a contradiction between developing broadly and becoming more receptive, and having a stronger and stronger sense of one's own individuality?

S: Yes, indeed, I think one could say that. Anyway, the more impersonal you are, in the ordinary way, the stronger the individuality. Think of the Buddha; think of the tremendous impact that he made. He must have been, in ordinary terms, a tremendous personality, a real individual; but what was the core of that individuality? An experience of sunyata!

Kulamitra: So that that experience of sunyata would not necessarily mean that one didn't have an intense experience of I-ness, even though you didn't objectify that experience?

S: I think it's a question of not throwing the baby away with the bathwater. Very often we tend to do that. One might even go so far as to say - though it might sound a bit heretical - that one shouldn't be afraid of the experience of I-ness; it is only its limitations that one should be afraid of.

Because I-ness is what is most real to us; nothing is more real than that sense; so we can't really think of Reality in any other terms. So perhaps it is at least sometimes helpful to think of the experience of

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Reality in terms of an expanded experience of I-ness, I-ness without its limitation. After all, we do that with the emotions, we think of Enlightenment as infinite Compassion, or even as infinite Wisdom; why not as infinite I-ness? Admittedly, that is open to misunderstanding; all these modes of speech where you apply a human experience or faculty to the Absolute, so to speak, and then expand it infinitely, are also open to misunderstanding

in the same way.

: Would this feeling of I-ness be intensified indeed to one regarding the world as one's creation and feelins quite free to do what one wanted with it?

S: It might; but then you would have to discover from experience whether you actually could do with it as you wished. But the sort of 'I' that could wish to do things to the world in that way, presumably, would no longer exist at that level of I-ness.

This does raise other philosophical questions, but I don't think we'll go into those.

Abhaya: Another question about the alaya from Ratnaguna, about the utjnanauadtns and the alaya.

Ratnanuna: How did the Yogacharins see the absolute alaya? Did they see

that it exists all the time and you have to contact it, or that it doesn't exist until Insight is attained? I ask that because, in the chart, there is the white, and from the way you talk about it in the lecture, it seems as if you've got to just get there.

S: I suppose if you talk about it at all, you can't help talking about it in those terms, because even if you speak of it in as it were subjective terms, in terms of realisation, you still have to speak in terms of you

getting to that realisation, as though the realisation is some sort of object. I can't fall back on any recollection of actual texts, but I assume that the Yogacharins must have thought of the absolute alaya in terms of, for instance, sunyata in the highest sense, or Enlightenment, Buddhahood, and so on. Because it was for them the Ultimate, so they would have applied all the traditional Buddhist terms for the Ultimate to the absolute alaya.

Ratnaguna: I was wondering also why the absolute alaya is called the alaya, because the relative alaya is the repository; the absolute alaya presumably

isn't.

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S: To the best of my recollection, the term absolute alaya is not used in the Yogachara. They simply speak of the alaya, without distinguishing it from the relative alaya; though I believe



there is a term, which I can't recollect, sometimes used for the relative alaya. So sometimes it is not easy to make out what they are actually talking about. It is as though sometimes the relative alaya shades off into the absolute alaya. Perhaps that has also its methodological value as reminding us that we mustn't make too sharp distinctions or take them too literally.

Ratnaguna: So is the term 'absolute alaya' your own?

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S: No, I think I have come across it elsewhere; I don't recollect that I coined this. In another context, of course, the Yogachara speaks of *pazLnLspanna*~ doesn't it, which would be the sort of epistemological counterpart of the absolute alaya?

Ratnaguna: What does that mean?

S: Epistemology is the theory of knowledge, so in terms of cognition, from the point of view of the theory of knowledge, you can speak of the alaya. In other words, the *pazLnLspanna* is that level of cognition which

epistemologically corresponds to the metaphysical or ontological idea of alaya <citta?>. Though again it must be said that the alaya <citta?> of

the Yogachara is conceived of, or at least approached, from a more psycholo

gical point of view. As Chatterjee points out, it is seen - did I say the alaya? or the citta - is seen ontologically. The point of departure in the Yogachara is, one might say, psychological in an extended sense. The emphasis is experiential, as I emphasise in the lecture, but sometimes the content of the experience is quasi-reified and given a sort of ontological status which is not to be taken too literally. How many more questions?

Abhaya: We are half way through. The next question is from Ruchiraketu on behalf of Ratnaprabha.

Ruchiraketu: This question is on seeds in the relative alaya. There are a few questions. First of all, are these seeds identical to

karmas? And how do they relate to the three kinds of seeds

in the Chinese Wheels of Life?

S: Let's deal with those first. Clearly, it is a metaphorical expression,

so one can't subject it to too much theoretical or philosophical analysis. The seeds represent *vasanas*, traces left in, as it were, the relative alaya.

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They are more like, one could say, karmic potencies. They remain latent, and when the suitable conditions arise within one's particular life stream of life continuum, they manifest in

the form of experiences. So in that way they could be regarded as having karmic significance. So what was the second question there?

Ruchiraketu: How do they relate to the three kinds of seeds in the Chinese Wheels of Life?

S: I think in the Chinese Wheel of Life, the concept or image of seeds is used in a slightly different way. None the less, the general significance would seem to be the same, because they represent potentialities, and clearly those potentialities will manifest when appropriate conditions arise. In the case of the Chinese Wheel of Life, it is not so much the fact of seeds itself but the relative numbers of seeds, indicating a higher degree of potentiality. For instance, in the case of Buddha-seeds, what does that mean? A Buddha-seed means it represents the capacity ... (End of tape.) ... So if in the Chinese Wheel of Life, in one sphere of existence there are, say, three Buddha-seeds and in another there are five, what does that mean? It means that in the sphere in which there are only three Buddhaseeds, conditions are much less favourable to the attainment of Enlightenment than in that sphere of existence where there are five seeds. It doesn't mean that in one case there are literally three and in the other literally five. It is just a way of expressing the degree of suitability for the attainment of Enlightenment in one sphere of existence as compared to another. So the general significance is much the same.

Ruchiraketu: A filrthpr nilAs:tinn is! rmn nnP rPsilv nhtsin rn rilAThAl\}

by accumulating pure seeds, if they are just good karma or merit? Because in the lecture you spoke of accumulating white seeds which

S: Yes, quite. Well, how white is white? What does one mean by a 'good seed'? Is it good merely in the sense of punya? But then again, there is an interesting distinction, I think in the Sarvastivada, between p2atisanF khynLzodha and apzatLsankhyanLzodha. I don't know if you are familiar with that. Szatisankhyanttodha - nc20dha means cessation; it is virtually a synonym for Nirvana - so p2atLsamkhyan~20dha is cessation or, you could

say, attainment of Nirvana, in the sense of developing Insight which eliminates or cuts through the as2avas. ctpzatesamkhyani20dha is the attainment of nt20dha or, one might say, Nirvana, not as a result of cutting through  
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the astavas~ the exhaustion of the astavas because one is not as it were encouraging their production any more. One could argue it is a rather artificial distinction, but it is there in the tradition. So similarly, one could say that it is possible to tip the balance just by a sheer accumulation of positive seeds, just as it is possible to tip the balance by the actual introduction of Buddha seeds. Though I think in this context this threefold distinction is not made; that is the Chinese distinction.

But I think much of it depends on what one means by good seeds. Perhaps it doesn't exclude the notion of Insight.

Abhaya: The next question is from Suvajra about the elaboration of the metaphor of the

absolute alaya pushing out impure seeds.

S: Does that mean that Suvajra is going to elaborate the metaphor?

Abhaya: We don't know.

Suvajra: No, that wasn't what I said. You explained in the lecture that the absolute alaya pushed on the positive seeds, which then pushed the negative seeds out. What does that actually mean in other terms?

S: It refers back, perhaps, to what I said about the reflection of the alaya. Because you've got that reflection, so to speak, within you, but it is hidden, it is obscured. Let me give another example. Supposing there is a fire, hidden, some embers, deep down in a rubbish heap, but on top perhaps there is a whole pile of wet leaves. So because the fire is smothered in wet leaves it can't burn up, it can only smoulder. You've just got embers right at the bottom. But supposing you dry those wet leaves; then what happens? The flame can rise up from within, can't it, and lick through those dry leaves and emerge, as it were. It is much like that: that, if you do your bit on the conscious level, factors will start coming into operation from what we can only describe as a deeper level; that deeper level, of course, being the subjective reflection of a higher level. Perhaps we can just leave it at that and ponder on that.

Abhaya: We now have three questions on clarification of the chart, the first two from Ratnaguna.

S: Can I look at the chart, please? Yes.

Ratnaguna: The first one is the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body on the right. There are arrows leading into the neno-utjnana, but

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only two of the arrows carry on through the klesto-nano-uLjnana. Is that just the - ?

S: - graphic; I think it's purely graphic; yes, it must be. There is no other significance. Let me just think about that. There is the point that the eye and the ear are the two most highly developed senses. That might have some significance, but on the other hand, if you take it literally, the nose uL jnana, the tongue Ui jnana and so on are not making any actual contact with the mano-utjnana, which is impossible. So perhaps even though

eye and ear do have a certain primacy there is no difference between the three uF jnanas and the two Ui jnanas, corresponding to the difference in

the way in which they have been represented in this chart. I think it is just for purposes of simplicity, because if you had extended, say, the nose utjnana arrow, it would have merged and you couldn't have been sure in which direction it was going, whether it was an input or an output, It could be just for that reason. I suspect that is the case.

Ratnaguna: The second one is: the arrows going from the ear and the eye go through the mano-ujjnana, through the klisto-nano-uijnana

and into the relative alaya. and there are two arrows. one

that is in the klistos7eno-uiinana, then it fades in again to the alaya Ui jnana. I wonder what that means.

S: I don't think that has any special significance. I think the general sig

nificance is that there was an input from the so-called external world through the five senses into the mano-uiinana, and a third input based on that from the rnano-uiinana into the klisto-rnano-ujnana, and a further input based on that from the klisto-mano-uiinana to the relative alaya.

Incidentally, I didn't dwell upon this in the lecture, but according to the Yogachara there are ideas which arise from purely mental experience which are not derived from sense experience. That is a quite important distinction. Just a few days ago I happened to be rereading the famous passage from Coleridge where he says that everyone is born either a Platonist or an Aristotelian and what is the difference between the two? Well, according to Plato, not all our ideas originate in sense impressions, whereas according to Aristotle they do. This is the big difference. And I reflected on this and then I thought, as far as I can see, at least superficially, the Buddhist view is that there are some ideas which do not originate from sense impressions. So, from that point of view, Buddhism is closer to Platonism than to Aristotelianism. That has all sorts of important implica

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tions. Because if there is within you a level that is deeper than the level of sense experience, why should all ideas be mediated through sense experience? Anyway, that is a separate question.

Ratnaguna: I have one more question on the chart.

In the chart. the subjective mano-ulinana seems to have three

subsections: dream states, distracted states and concentrated states. In the lecture you mention the subdivisions as being

awareness of ideas which arise independently of sense impres- sions;

S: That might refer to dream states.

Ratnaguna: No, that's the last one - images perceived in dreams, that's the third one. And the second one is functions such as those

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Of the imagination, comparison and recollection. I wondered if they were the same, only with different names.

S: They don't seem to be the same. I can't think where they might have come from, unless the graphic artist just introduced them himself; though he must have got them from somewhere. I would have to look up all the literature and see whether those terms did occur, though they

are clearly English terms. I don't know how they got there, I can't remember.

Give those three terms again that occur in the lecture.

Ratnaguna: First, awareness of ideas which arise independently of sense impressions.

S: That could be concentrated states. And the next?

Ratnaguna: Functions such as those of imagination, comparison, recollection.

S: Well, one could regard that as a distraction from the point of view of concentration. And that leaves dream states.

Ratnaguna: Images perceived in dreams.

S: They could be in correspondence. Though where these terms came from I just don't know. Maybe the graphic artist just paraphrased in that way; but the terms I used in the lecture seem clearer. But again, I can't really be sure where those terms came from.

: Do you remember who did the art?

S: Yes, that was Shantibhadra, I think he was called; he was a then Order member, one of the very early ones; he resigned after a short while. He was a graphic artist; Mike somebody.

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: Mike Ricketts.

S: Mike Ricketts, yes. He was quite a good graphic artist. Could ring him up and ask him! (Few words inaudible.) I'm not even sure if he's still alive.

Abhaya: There is another question on the chart from Dharmapriya.

DharmaDriva: In the diagram of the ul jnanas, five items are enumerated

beside the eye-ul jnana: namely, attraction, sensation, impression, imagination and volition. This is a double question.

F;ret Scz thic: n rloeirrintinn nf tho nrnenes.s nf sense nerceDtion

and as such applicable to each of the five Dharmic senses?

S: Yes, I believe so. I would have to look it up to be completely sure, but, yes, it would appear so.

Dharmapriya: Secondly, if so, is 'attraction' to be understood as 'contact', 'sensation' and 'imagination as recognition and 'volition' as

the other or something similar?

S: I rather think that volition doesn't correspond to the other, but I would really have to look up

the Sanskrit terms. I think the English equivalents don't really tell us very much. I can't think now what 'attraction' might mean. Maybe it represents some sort of affinity - or, yes, in the Abhidharma, there is a term which is usually rendered by 'adverting' - the organ has to turn towards the appropriate object. So perhaps that is what is meant. But I would have to check up the original terms to be sure. But clearly it does represent the process of perception, so to speak. Sensation would seem to be uedana, but one can't be completely sure of that. How are we going?

Abhaya: We've got six more questions. The next question is from Susiddhi.

Susiddhi: Part one: what meditation techniques did the Yogacharins practise?

S: To the best of my knowledge, they practised the standard ones which are common to all forms of Buddhism: that is, they practised the anapanasati and the brahmavihi2ras and the vipasyana exercises. I think we don't often realise how common and how basic these kammatthanas, as Buddhaghosa calls them, actually were. The only real variations which have been introduced are the Vajrayanic visualisations, one could say. Even they could be regarded as an elaboration of kasinas. Zen practices are clearly

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vipasyana-type practices, perhaps in some cases put in a more paradoxical form; but even though different schools might have differed from one another very much doctrinally, the ethical observances and the meditation practices seem to have differed very little.

Prakasha: Did they have particular Insight practices, particular trainings of reflection?

S: Yes, clearly there would be; though the principle of Insight would be the same, the actual content would vary, one could say, from school to school, according to the nature of its teaching. A Yogacharin would develop Insight by reflecting, say, on the One Mind, or that essence was perceptible; whereas Madhyamika would simply reflect, say, on sunyata, the three different kinds of sunyata. In the Theravada tradition and later tradition itself, it is recognised that there are different approaches to Ultimate Reality because the three ulnrksha dvayas (?) represent three such doors or approaches, don't they? - let us say, the ap2anihita-sa7adAl, the sunyatanadhl and the animitta-samadhl.

Susiddhi: Part two: did the Yogacharins describe their meditation experiences in terms of the dhyanas or did they develop their own

system to describe and discuss their progress in meditation?

S: In the Yogachara Abhidharma, as in all the schools, covered by this particular field, they describe the dhyanas in the usual way.

Whether the experience of the dhyanas in that form, or the experience of the dhyanas as described in the canonical literature, played a very important part in Yogachara spiritual practice is another question, but certainly they recognised their existence in that way, as did all the other schools, where those dhyanas were, the lower and the higher, in the canonical literature. But to what extent they based their practice on them or measured their practice against them is another matter. We don't really know very much about these things, in the

sense that there are really no records left as far as one knows. But certainly they did recognise those dhyanas, at least theoretically, and their meditation experience and their Insight must, as far as one can see, have been based upon some experience at least of those dhyanas, even though they don't go into them very much perhaps. If they meditated at all, if they practised samatha at all, they clearly recognised the distinction between samatha and ulpasyana, they must have had some experience of the dhyanas. But again, we don't so far as I know have anything in the way of records.

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Abhaya: The next question is from Ratnaguna about hanging upside down.

Ratnaguna: In the lecture, Bhante, you say that if one is really living ~ if one is hanging upside down in a void. Did you mean that we should feel like that sll thn timn i f we are realiv nractisina sincerely, or that

that occasionally happens?

S: Well, in some ways don't take me too literally. But as one advances in the spiritual life, you just start seeing things in a completely different way from before. What you had thought of before as up you now see as down, and ulce uezsa. So until you get used to seeing things the right way round, and so long as you are still hanging on to some extent to your old way of seeing things, you may well have that sensation of sort of hanging upside down, or equivalent sensations. For instance - put in the most basic terms you may have been accustomed to seeing certain things as permanent, but now you see that they are impermanent. Your estimation of things has been reversed. The ulpazyasas are sometimes translated as 'topsy-turvy views.' Actually, now you are the right way up, but it feels as if you are the wrong way up, that you are upside down instead of right side up, because before you were actually topsy-turvy; you were seeing things in the wrong way. So until you get used to seeing things in the right way, you have an uneasy feeling that you are seeing things in the wrong way, because you are seeing them in a way that you are not accustomed to. For instance, to give a simple and perhaps not very suitable or appropriate example: when you start living in a men's community for the first time, you feel that there is somethina wrong; there's no women around. So you don't feel, 'It's all right, it's wonderful' - no, you feel there's something a bit wrong, there's something missing. But after a while you get used to it, and it feels all right. Or again, to give another down-to-earth example, after a while you may not feel any actual sexual impulse, and you might feel, well, this is very odd, there must be something wrong. In fact, there is nothing wrong, you are just becoming a bit more spiritually mature and a bit more depolarised. But for a while you are just in between the old experience and the new, so the new feels not quite right, even though it is right.

Abhaya: The next question is from Prakasha on the relationship between pa2au2l ttl and Stream Entry.

Praknsha! Yes. I was iust wonderina whether the turningq about relates

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more to the arising of Insight, the Stream Entry sort of experi-

ence, or to Enlightenment.

S: I have always assumed that pazauzEtl corresponded to Stream Entry. Of course, one has to be careful about making these sort of correlations, but this is certainly what I have always assumed. Perhaps one can say that there are degrees of pazautftl; though, as far as I recollect, the Fankavataza seems to treat it as an instantaneous experience. In other words, not to think of it in terms of degrees, as though perhaps pazauztfl did represent the attainment of full Enlightenment, but one can certainly say that, at the very least, pazautftl represents Stream Entry.

Kulamitra: As described in the lecture, which presumably is as per the Lankavata2a, it says that when pazautftl takes place, the eight uljnanas become the five Wisdoms, which would seem to imply full Enlightenment.

S: Yes. Assuming that they become the five Wisdoms instantaneously. That is not explicitly stated. It might take some time; which would correspond to it taking some time, you know, after Stream Entry, to gain 8rohantship

Ratnaguna: Couldn't you also think in terms of different degrees of realising the five Wisdoms?

S: You could do that, yes, indeed.

Abhaya: The next question is mine. I think you have answered this to some extent, Bhante, though not completely. I think it was in a recent Question and Answer session that you said, first, that the ontological/cosmological interpretation of the alaya is not very helpful - the alaya as a sea stirred UD with waves; a better approach is 'Here we are with our

limited, conditioned way of thinking and being; but we can grow and develop. This is the message of original Buddhism.' Secondiv. in another context you advised against Order members

getting bogged down in the metaphysical emphasis of the Mahayana. Over the years you have been teaching us, I have rarely if at all heard you expound the One Mind teaching. In view of all this, how do you propose we usefully approach the teaching of this material to our Mitras?

S: I think you need initially to deliver all sorts of warnings. Perhaps one needs also to point out that, in a completely balanced approach, being completely objective, one has to think of the spiritual life in two ways:

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that is to say, in terms of development and growth, in terms of travelling along a path to a goal; but also, on the other hand, one has to speak in terms of a gradual unfolding from a centre which is already there. Both ways of talking about the spiritual life are open to misunderstanding, based on an over-literal reading of the particular metaphor. But original



Buddhism certainly speaks more in terms of growth and development and the attainment of a goal than it does in terms of unfolding from a centre which is already there; in fact, it doesn't really speak in those sort of terms at all; those terms are found really only in the Mahayana. I think probably that the terms used in original Buddhism are less open to misunderstanding, certainly by beginners. Also, though the description of spiritual life in terms of unfolding from a centre which is already there is quite valid, it is almost bound to be misunderstood in the West. It can be an almost classic example of the kltstosTano-atinana appropriating the reflection

of the ataya in itself. You think, 'Yes, if I'm already Enlightened, if I just have to manifest something which is already there, there is nothing really I need to do.' So perhaps, for purely methodological reasons, one can't make much use of that way of talking about spiritual life, i.e. in terms of unfolding from a centre that is already there, or realising the existence of something that is already there. But, for the sake of completeness in studying Buddhism, and also perhaps to make it clear that ever; the metaphor of the Path and development cannot be taken completely literally, one has from time to time to bring in this other way of looking at the spiritual life, at least to a limited extent. Perhaps one can go into this quite frankly with Mitras. Perhaps that would be best.

I think possibly, in the case of Order members, and certainly more experienced Order members, it perhaps would not be a bad thing from time to time just to look at things in this other way, and even to study texts which approach the spiritual life in this other way. One can do this on the basis of an actual regular practice of the step-by-step approach. But there is no harm in thinking that you are already Enlightened, provided your actual practice is based on the assumption that you aren't!

Abhaya: Three more questions. The next one is from me. Do you see any affinities between Blake's vision and the Yogachara exDosition of Realitv? I was thinking of Blake's idea that

the limits of the world are co-extensive with the field of

our senses. Perhaps Blake's approach would be more inspirational

for us in this resDect. What do vou think?

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S: Well, Blake is of coursea literary figure. He is a poet, he is not a systematic philosopher, but it does seem that there are these sort of points of contact. Don't forget that Blake was saturated, onemight say,

in neo-Platonism and other such traditions. If one can find any sort of equivalence to Buddhist or especially Yogachara thinking in Blake, one can certainly make use of them, if they do make the spiritual life, or Buddhism itself, more intelligible.

Abhaya: Prakasha has a question in this area.

Prn>-Wnhn- YP.q TIVP nnt A nllntv Rlsks wrv.R- vFrnr is created. Tr~sth

is Eternal. Error, or creation, will be Burned up, and then and not till then, Truth or Eternity

will appear. It is burnt UD the moment men cease to behold it. I assert for myself

that I do not behold the outward creation but that to me it  
is a hindrance and not Action; it is the dirt upon my feet;

no part of Me.'

Do you think that Blake had had an analogous experience to the 'turning about' as mentioned in the Yogachara, and how closely do you think Blake's Apocalypse parallels the 'turning about'?

S: It doesn't seem to parallel the 'Turning about' so much as the idea of removing the adventitious defilements, which is usually considered to be a gradual process. I don't know that there was any point in Blake's life, as revealed in his biography, at which he had a sort of sudden conversion type of experience. It is as though his spiritual life consisted, as far as the records show, in a process of more or less gradual maturation; not that there was any sudden turning about or sudden revelation at one particular point. He seemed to have visionary experiences, for instance, right from the beginning, almost, in very early childhood. There does seem to be a certain correspondence. I think we should be careful how we press or apply it in detail. But if we can establish, as I said, any valid point of correspondence, we can certainly make use of that; though, again, we must be careful not to get too enthusiastic in introducing beginners to these things, because in the case of beginners who have never heard of Blake and aren't particularly interested, it may make it more difficult for them to understand Buddhism. It adds a very complicating factor. Make sure that the person is familiar with Blake and likes Blake and appreciates Blake. Some people find Blake much more difficult to understand

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than they find the Buddhist Scriptures! So if you want to explain something in terms of something else, you explain it in terms of something that is simpler and easier, not in terms of something that is more difficult! You explain the Abhidharma in terms of the Suttas, not the Suttas in terms of the Abhidharma.

Abhaya: One more question, from Ruchiraketu.

Ruchiraketu: Yes, this is from Ratnaprabha as well.

In the lecture you mention a famous South Indian teacher who tried to break the rock. The question

is: who was the famous South Indian teacher?

S: That was Swami Ramdas, whom I have mentioned in my Thousand-?etall2d Zotus, who lived at Kanhangad.

Well, that was a nice simple little one to end with. I thought I was going to get a very difficult one to end up with.

Ratnaguna: I think actually one of mine has been missed out.

Abhaya: Oh dear.

Ratnaguna: It's not a difficult one.

S: Well, we'll wait and see.

Ratnaguna: In the lecture, you use the term 'Absolute Mind'. Is the term 'Absolute Mind' your own rendering of the *catasnatza*, or is

there another term which you have translated?

S: The *Lankavatara* often speaks of the *catas*, so I think I describe the *Catata*, with a capital C, so to speak - there are no capitals in Devanagari as Absolute Mind, just to make it clear that one isn't talking about mind in the ordinary limited sense. I don't think there is any expression actually corresponding to Absolute Mind. One can look up Suzuki's *Studies in the Lankavatara Sutra*, which is one of his very best works, if not his best very interesting and very readable.

Abhaya: That's it.

S: Ah well, we've done quite well, haven't we? I rather suspect that tomorrow we shall have something a bit easier, won't

is it tomorrow?

Abhaya: 'Archetypal Symbolism in the Biography of the Buddha'

S: It might be easier.

Abhaya: - which is actually in the *Mahavastu*, which most of us have  
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studied.

S: Ah. That is relatively more familiar ground, isn't it? Everybody knows about the archetypes and the five Buddhas and all that sort of thing. We should have a very easy evening, a very easy day come to that. But don't take the material too much for granted. Go over it again anyway, even if you do know it already.

I think it is quite important that from time to time - when they get time - people reflect on the Dharma; I think there is not nearly enough reflection on it. Or reflection on what one reads. Yes, maybe one has developed one's *sutanta-pajna* fairly well, one's understanding or wisdom based on hearing; but one's *catanta-pajna* perhaps is not being given very much development. I think there is a need for a lot more of that sort of thing in the Movement. It is not a sort of wild, speculative tendency that one is talking about, but a sort of deep pondering on what one has learned and studied, reflecting on it quietly, trying to go deeper into it and make it more one's own. You link one thing up with another. I mean it is clear from the questions that some of you do this to some extent. I suspect that you usually do it only in the context of a situation like this, and that it is not sort of habitual. But there should be things that you are thinking about all the time or take up from time to time, when you are ri

zus or don't have anything particular to do for the time being or for half an hour, just let your mind advert to this particular topic, and go into it a bit more. I think there is a need for a lot more of this sort of thing in the Movement, especially among Order members; perhaps most of all among those who lead study or give talks. I have been pleased to see, more recently, that sometimes, some talks that I hear, for instance in Men's Events, do show signs of what one might call independent thought. They are not simply reproductions of material that the person has studied. And clearly he has been thinking about that material and has added something to it or developed it in a particular way, and that is quite interesting to see.

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#### DAY FOUR

Abhaya: Bhante, we have 10 questions on the lecture 'Archetypal Symbolism in the Biography of the Buddha.' The first question is from Ratnaguna on the meaning of the unconscious.

Ratnaguna: If I may just paraphrase you from the lecture, Bhante - I haven't got the exact quote, but it is something like this. You say < in the lecture > that, when talking about the ^-At' A we have to be receptive~ take in these archetypal symbols,

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allow them to speak in their own way to our unconscious minds.

What exactly does that mean, I wonder?

S: Your unconscious mind?

Ratnaguna: Not only the unconscious mind, but in what way do the archetypal symbols speak to us?

S: Well, perhaps here we could go back to Bishop Berkeley. We all have been confronted by archetypal symbols, so what happens? Maybe one should just analyse one's own experience. What does happen? Because we have all experienced it to some extent, even the most scientifically minded among us - whoever that might be! With regard to this term the unconscious mind, as I have said before, one shouldn't take this too literally. There isn't a thing called the unconscious mind as distinct from a thing called the conscious mind. There are certain mental contents which are our mental contents in the sense that they are subject to recall by us; from being not conscious of them we can become more conscious of them. For instance, we may be feeling vaguely annoyed; but that feeling of annoyance may not come into clear consciousness. It may be, as we say, only semi-conscious or less than semi-conscious, or we may say that it is partly or mainly buried in our unconscious mind; that is just another way of putting it. And, obviously, if we examine ourselves, we can become more and more aware, more and more conscious, of the fact that our mood is one of

resentment or whatever it might be. And by concentrating on that feeling or that mood, we can so to speak bring it up into consciousness, we can become more and more aware of our actual mental or actual emotional state. So it is rather like that, when we confront this archetypal symbol. It might happen if you go and visit an art gallery and you see a painting, and there is something in it you don't understand but it makes a very powerful appeal, it stirs you. But to begin with you don't really know why. Perhaps you don't even feel it very strongly, in a sense, or very clearly; there is

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some obscure response - as though the painting or the symbol in the painting is speaking to something which is quite buried. But if you dwell upon it, if you think about it, you can gradually understand what it is within you that is responding in this way, what it is in you that the picture or the symbol in the picture is speaking to, and you can gradually bring the two things together and understand 'This is why it is affecting me' at least, you can understand it to some extent. We all experience this.

Ratnaguna: Yes, I get the feeling for what you mean, but I was wondering if we could be more precise and sort of get

S: I think it is of the very nature of this archetypal material that precision is impossible. It is well known that Jung never really clearly defined what an archetype is. You have to gather what it is as you go along, sort of thing. So I think we are handling a very different kind of material. It is probably not without significance that you have only come up with 10 questions. It is not that the material is easy in comparison with the material in the previous three lectures; it is more that it is a different type of material which is not susceptible to that sort of intellectual approach. You can't reduce it to questions and, hopefully, answers. And it is in some ways, assuming you have really done your homework, quite a good sign that you have only come up with 10 questions. It would have been very suspicious, perhaps, if you had come up with 20 or 30. One might have suspected an over-intellectual or over-rational approach to the archetypal material.

But again really one must consult one's own experience. Don't take it for granted that you know why a particular symbol appeals to you, or a particular painting. You know in my study down at Sukhavati I have got that Holman Hunt painting of the Scapegoat. People have got used to it now, but quite a few people who came to see me a few years ago didn't like that painting; they didn't like that symbol, you could say. Some of them even seemed to feel a little uneasy with it. So clearly it was affecting them in a particular way; perhaps it would have been a good idea for them to have just tried to understand why this was. Here is this poor old black goat, the scapegoat, having been driven out to die; one would have thought it was a quite pathetic creature. Admittedly, he has a rather wicked look in his eyes, but that's perhaps neither here nor there. You can still feel quite sorry for someone who is wicked, assuming they are really wicked. But people didn't seem to be happy with this old black goat, didn't seem to think it at all the right kind of picture for Bhante's study! I think

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some of them thought Bhante might be creating entirely the wrong sort of impression. Clearly, they responded to it. Perhaps I should have gone into the question more with some of them, but I didn't actually do that. But I certainly noticed the response on the part of some of them. Perhaps they thought Bhante ought to have had a nice Buddha figure there, or at least a nice flower painting or something by Turner; something recognisably Art, you know, beautiful! Not this rather silly old goat, you know, with a rather sort of unpleasant look in his eyes - a scowl, you know. And this rainbow! It was all rather difficult to understand! In any case, it was, so you gathered, something out of the Old Testament, and what on earth was that doing in Bhante's study? One would have thought that Bhante had finished with all that sort of thing years ago, when he was a small child!

Yes, it is interesting to look at our responses to symbols. Some people have been quite fascinated by the symbol of the angel. Not necessarily because they themselves are angelic in disposition. There could be an entirely different reason for it.

Can you think of any symbols that people in the FWBO seem to respond to rather strongly in a positive sense, any sort of favourite symbols? leaving aside the Buddha image and things of that sort that one is expected to respond to.

Ratnaguna: The Annunciation seems quite popular.

S: The Annunciation, yes. Why do you think that is? Has anyone got any ideas why people respond strongly or sympathetically to the figure of the Annunciation?

Ratnaguna: I am only assuming that, because you see so many postcards of it.

S: It is, if you're thinking of, say, the Fra Angelico Annunciation, rather a beautiful thing, to begin with. I don't know whether paintings of pictures of the Annunciation are as popular with the women in the Movement as with the men. Sometimes they are not very happy with the Virgin Mary, in any case. But any ideas why the Annunciation might be a popular theme?

: There is sometimes quite a strong feeling of communication in the picture.

S: Ah yes, that's true. I have noticed that in the case of some of the pictures and sculptures I've seen. Especially I remember I went to see the Cluny Museum in Paris, which is mainly of medieval art. There was

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a beautiful pair of wooden statues, each about so high, one of the Virgin Mary, the other of the Archangel Gabriel. They must have been taken from some altarpiece. I think they were 14th century or even earlier. One was placed on one side of the door and the other on the other, and they really seemed to be in communication; you could almost see an exchange taking place between them. They were beautiful statues, beautifully carved, with very refined expressions. So perhaps, yes, perhaps it stands for that. I think it is quite interesting - I think I've discussed this either

painters have represented that communication or contact in different ways. In some paintings, the Virgin Mary shrinks away, as though she is afraid of the message that Gabriel is bringing. I mean some artists don't handle the scene at all successfully; she looks coy, in a rather unpleasant way, or simpering. In others, she is calmly or humbly acquiescing. Sometimes Gabriel is represented as bursting in upon her with the good news. Sometimes he is sympathetic, sometimes he is quite solemn, aware of the significance of the message with which he has come. So you get different painters treating this same simple scene in a very different ways, with varying degrees of sensitivity. But the best of them represent a very refined and very subtle and very spiritual type of communication between the two figures, in various ways. So it could be that, for many people, this is a symbol of communication; even of inspiration, you might say.

Any other ideas?

Prakasha: Something heroic, I was thinking - well, almost the heroic anywhere. I was thinking of the Sistine Chapel, something like that. The heroic generally.

S: Yes. But a particular symbol? Because the heroic is a quality, isn't it?

Dharmapriya: Among the angels the Archangel Michael - it seems to be to do with his light, the light that is associated with him, and he seems to have a sword, very often.

S: Yes, the name Michael, Michael, literally means the strength of God. The Light of God is Uriel, whom you know Milton represents as the regent of the sun, the angel standing in the midst of the sun. What about that painting that was quite popular a few years ago, Tobias and the Angel? That seemed to me to be regarded as a symbol, I suppose one could say,  
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of kalyana mtt2ata, spiritual friendship. Young Tobias, trustingly trotting along by the side of the angel with his hand in fact in the hand of the angel, and the little dog scampering in front.

Anything else? Any other popular symbol?

Virananda: A lot of people seem to like Leonardo's painting of the Virgin of the rocks, and she might be some kind of archetypal female symbol which appeals to many people. Not necessarily Christian, I think, in that context.

S: So we have had angels and we have had female figures, haven't we? Wasn't David popular a few years ago? (Voices: Oh yes.) Well, was he a symbol or was it just the straightforward attraction of that beautiful figure, not to say that beautiful physique? Was he a symbol, do you think, or not? (Silence.) Perhaps he was for some people. After all, he is 'little David', though it is difficult to think of him as little David, but in the Bible he is little David pitted against the giant, you know, Goliath; he is the little guy who beats the big guy. The little guy is also the good guy, the big guy is the bad guy, as we all know. So there is a bit of symbolism there, of a basic type, one could say.

: Oh, I've thought of one. Several people, I can remember, on different occasions

during reporting in have told of their visit to either the Geological Museum or the Tower of London, and how impressive they found the stones, the jewels. And I think these have been acting as some kind of symbol.

S: Ah, yes. That could well be the case.

Suvajra: Various of the Greek gods at various times in the Movement have been quite popular - like Apollo.

S: OK, then, let's pass on.

Abhaya: The second question is from Tejananda on the Mara incident.

Tejananda: In the talk you describe Mara being discomfited at the Buddha's

Enlightenment. but I find rather Duzzlina another episode concern

ing Mara in the Mahapa2lnLbbana Sutta , where, after Ananda's failure to take up the Buddha's broad hint that he could live on to the end of the kalpa, Mara begs the Buddha now to pass into cazLntbbana. to which the Buddha replies that he will

do so in three months. What does it signify that Mara should

be shown as doing this?

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S: Well, I suppose it is quite understandable that Mara should want the Buddha out of the way as quickly as possible. It is quite bad enough that he gained Enlightenment, and not only gained Enlightenment but has actually by this time been around for 45 years; so from Mara's point of view the sooner he gets rid of him or the sooner he gets rid of himself the better. So I think there is no lack of motivation on Mara's part, this is very clear - even though the episode as a whole is rather mysterious and difficult to understand. But I think Mara's part is prstty obvious; he is just that factor in the universe, you might say, which is not very comfortable in the presence of Enlightenment.

Tejananda: There is no hint in that that the Buddha is actually acquiescing to Mara.

S: It reads a little bit like that, but then the Buddha has got to die one day anyhow, so from that point of view Mara will gain his point; the Buddha will disappear from the scene and Mara is perhaps concerned to hurry that as much as he possibly can. Perhaps he even knows that the Buddha is not really taken in, but Mara never gives up. There might be an opportunity for him to influence the Buddha, even, to take advantage of the Buddha's weakness; perhaps he doesn't really believe that the Buddha is Enlightened; perhaps he doesn't believe that there is such a thing as Enlightenment; perhaps he thinks that if he dogs the Buddha's steps for long enough he will find a weak spot one day. Mara represents, you could say, the gravitational pull; that is always operating.



The whole episode is a little puzzling. I have explained it as best I can on other occasions. I don't want to repeat all that. But I think the part that Mara is playing here, or the significance of Mara here, is on the whole quite obvious.

Tejananda: In the Enlightenment part, Mara seems to represent not the parts of the Buddha which the Buddha is actually sublimating - you know,

karma

S: Well, that is one out of four possible interpretations, because there are four meanings to Mara.

Tejananda: It would seem that in this it must be Devaputta Mara, because obviously any sort of subjective Mara has been overcome, so

S: Well, again, this raises the question of the nature of the process whereby Enlightenment is attained. I have mentioned, perhaps, before,

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that one mustn't think of it as attained at one particular instant of time. Perhaps the process of attaining Enlightenment constitutes a spiritual struggle extending over a comparatively long period. Perhaps the Buddha did have quite a struggle with Mara - was in a sense actually tempted by Mara and then did overcome him, and thereby attained Enlightenment. At least, that was one aspect of the process. Not that the Buddha had gained Enlightenment, as sometimes one is given the impression, and then along comes Mara to disturb him if possible. So, according to tradition, one doesn't see Mara simply as the personification of the defilements. There is, as you said, the Devaputta Mara, Mara as an actual personality, a discarnate entity in whom unskilful mental states seem to predominate very much over skilful ones; just as in the human world you occasionally meet someone who seems of a predominantly negative character. Such people will never, whether in or out of the physical body, rejoice in the merits of the good; they always try to hamper and hinder and obstruct.

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I remember this was one of the lessons that I learned fairly early in life - perhaps not early enough. If I look back on myself, I think that when I was young, that is in my teens and early twenties, I was really in some ways very, very naive. I genuinely felt that if you actually did your best and tried to lead a good life, etc. etc., then people would appreciate that and help you. But actually I found that that was not always the case. There were some people, at least a few, who despite the good life that you were leading, far from being pleased with that or happy, would be just the opposite and would do their best to harm and obstruct you. And I had never expected to find this; I was quite shocked when I did first find it, but that was just my naivete. There are people around fortunately, not too many - who don't rejoice in the good. Or perhaps to whom your good, which represents at least a genuine effort after the good, does not please or make happy; just the opposite.

So Mara is someone like that. He is not happy that a Buddha has arisen in the world, far from it. And the prospect of the Buddha departing from the world fills him with delight. I mean, there was a disciple of the Buddha like that - what was his name? Subhadda, wasn't it?

I think it was Subhadda who, after the pazentbbana, said: 'We are well rid of the Buddha. It is a good thing that he has died. He was always telling us: do this, don't do that. Now we can do as we please.' You see?

: No, it wasn't Subhadda. He was the last disciple of the

Buddha.

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S: That is true, but I believe, at least according to some accounts, it was none the less that Subhadda or possibly another disciple of the same name. <He was> the first individualist in Buddhist history! The patron saint of the individualist; there's a symbol for you! It should be quite popular with some of our Friends!

Abhaya: The next question is from Ratnaguna, on the animus factor.

S: We're in for a long session now!

Ratnaguna: At the end of the lecture, Bhante, you give a sort of path

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of progression, integrating the archetypal symbols of the Shadow (represented by Mara), the anima (represented by the Earth Goddess), the Wise Old Man (Brahma), and the Young Hero (Mucalin- da). This seems to be a progression for men. I wondered if there would be a different progression for women.

S: I wonder! Well, let's ask one. Well, why ask me? (Laughter.) I'm not an authority on women. I am sure at least half of you know ten times more about women than I do! I don't suggest you ask your girl friend, or even your mother, but some relatively neutral female character in your environment whom you could perhaps question on this delicate point. Do a little research. I really don't know; I've never really seriously thought about it. It would be nice to think that there was a neat correspondence, but I rather doubt that that is the case.

Ratnaguna: You don't think that they would

...

According to Jung, women have an animus instead of an anima, don't they? But I must say, I haven't gone much into it. I'm not so sure, I think it's a sort of mild criticism that is made of Jung that he did not explore the significance of the animus in the case of women to the extent that he explored the significance of the anima in the case of men. I believe that point has been made.

Ratnaguna: You don't think that the Young Hero would take the place of the animus, and that what they would end up as - their sort of goal - would be the Earth Goddess?

S: I think in the lecture itself I have indulged in quite enough speculation! It is a very interesting field. I think perhaps we ought to consult our own experience and the experience

of our friends, and just find out, maybe even read a bit more Jung. But I think that the general trend of thought, Jungian thought, in this respect, is that just as the anima repre  
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sents a man's, I was going to say suppressed, feminine side, but that's not really quite like that - the anima represents the trace left on the psyche of the man by all man's experiences of woman. And the anima is an archetype of the collective unconscious, so perhaps it is more that man is not fully conscious of the effect that woman - over the ages, because the anima is an archetype of the collective unconscious - has had on him; he has not come to terms with that. Though, in a sense, that is part of him, inasmuch as woman has left that impression, woman collectively as it were.

I don't think the anima as an archetype of the collective unconscious means simply, as we often think of it in the FWBO, the unrecooned or unrealised feminine part of the man. I think we have perhaps simplified a bit for our own purposes, which we are quite entitled to do. But I don't think Jung looks at it always quite in that way. So in the same way we tend to look at the animus, in the FWBO, as representing the more masculine side of a woman's make-up or psyche, that she is not in touch with, that she hasn't integrated into her conscious attitude. And no doubt, here too that is so. But that way of looking at the anima doesn't completely correspond with Jung's conception of the anima. I think his conception is rather more complex - perhaps not quite so personal and subjective as ours. I think it is quite easy for Jungian ideas, Freudian ideas, even Marxist ideas, to pass into general currency and be very simplified if not oversimplified in the process. They circulate in a sort of popular form that sometimes represents a gross oversimplification, even a falsification. So I think perhaps we need to go back to our Jung if we are going to use these terms at all, and see what he has to say: what, what is his conception of the anima and the animus?

Has anybody made a reasonably thorough study of Jung? No. I think we have to be a bit careful of this, because we may get rather away from our original source. I think it doesn't matter if we decide to use a term in a particular way - in which, in this case, say, it isn't used by Jung but we should know what we are doing. Jung is not all that difficult to read, and the material is quite accessible. We've got any amount of stuff by Jung in the Order Library - well, we've got most of his works, I think.

We've certainly got his book on the archetypes of the collective unconscious. I mean in every volume there is an index, and you can look up anima and animus and there you are; you can very easily find out. There are simple books about Jung, like that by Jolande Jacobi - that is quite a good, clear

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little book. So perhaps we need to do a little ~mework here. I must admit I haven't myself read Jung for quite a few years.

It might be appropriate to mention now that only yesterday, or the day before, perhaps, I got the first number of the new DakLnL, which was quite interesting, and maybe it will be

of as much interest to the men in the Movement as the women, inasmuch as it gives one a glimpse of the way in which women see things, women within the Movement. They see things, or try to see things, in a Buddhist way, but they don't see them in quite the same way as the men. If one becomes aware of that, that men see things in one way and women in another, it does help one to some extent to overcome one's particular psychological conditioning. It is quite a promising magazine. This first number is quite well produced - simply, but the content is quite good: articles and reviews and things like that. No doubt you'll be seeing it around your centre, even if not around your community! They might be having an article on the animus in the pages of *DakLnL* one day, which you could read, and be enlightened on the subject. Abhaya: The next question is from Ruchiraketu, on the source of the Abhi

dharmas.

Ruchiraketu: Yes, this is really just a point of information. In the lecture, you spoke of the Theravada belief that the Buddha taught the Abhidharma to his mother, you say, in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three. In a previous lecture, you say

that this happened in the Tushita Heaven So I was wondering PP is this due to a slip of the tongue or

S: When the question was asked me, whoever asked it spoke of the Tushita deva-loka but, come to think of it, I think actually it was the Heaven of the Thirty-Three, the *ttayadttana*(?). But one would have to check that. I won't be completely sure. Tushita was the heaven from which the Bodhisattva descended, according to some accounts, into the womb of his mother. It may well have been that he went up to the Heaven of the Thirty-Three, the one that Indra presides over, to teach the Abhidharma. But I would have to check that to make quite sure.

He descended afterwards, didn't he? According to tradition he spent a rainy season in that heaven, teaching his mother - no, there is another tradition that he descended each day to earth by a magnificent staircase which Buddhaghosa in his commentary describes at great length, escorted by Indra on the one hand and Brahma on the other; and the staircase was made of gold, silver and crystal. Well, there is a lot of symbolism, very

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colourful symbolism, in association with the Abhidharma. So clearly the Abhidharma aroused Buddhaghosa to great enthusiasm and delight.

Abhaya: Next, Prakasha's question on your own and Jung's sequence of main archetypes.

Prakasha: You enumerate the appearance of the Shadow, Anima, wise Old Man and Young Hero as a progressive sequence in the lecture. As I understand it, the Jungian path of individuation starts with the Young Hero and ends with the Self. I presume that the sequence can be related in a number of ways, but could you clarify this?

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S: I think I took as my starting point the sequence in the Buddhist material and correlated the

Jungian archetypes with those, because for me if you see that as representing a process of individuation, then you have to take those archetypes in that order. But that is, one might say, the beauty of this symbolical and archetypal material, it isn't tied down to one version. It isn't a question of this or that. Though perhaps, for certain people, some versions or some sequences make better sense than others. It is a complex process and I have simplified here, but I have taken as my basis or starting point the sequence of images in the traditional Buddhist account of the Enlightenment. For instance, a man whose anima was well integrated with his conscious attitude would not have to start off with integrating his anima, presumably, but somebody else might. I think it's important, again, to try to locate these images or these archetypes in one's own experience; ask oneself, Do I have a lot of not fully integrated as it were feminine feelings and attitudes, attitudes which I am not acknowledging sufficiently or incorporating sufficiently into my conscious attitude? etc. etc. Or have I not acknowledged my shadow? Have I not faced up to those negative aspects of my own personality, am I ignoring them? Am I pretending that they don't exist, or am I even covering them up?

I wonder if there is any other way of coming to terms with this material. Because, if we just read about it, talk about it, what else could we possibly do? Just reading and talking aren't necessarily always very effective, though no doubt they help. Has anybody tried any other approach? Some of you have been studying all sorts of Jungian stuff, archetypes and Blake, you know, or Zos.

Dharmapriya: Perhaps not so much reading about it as reading it. I have just noticed I keep getting drawn back to the Arthurian cycle. Just a  
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question of reading it, not even trying to think about it, but especially if I read a version that grips me strongly, some of that stays with me, if I'm on the bus or whatever. I don't know if that has a long-term effect; I haven't tried to analyse its effect.

S: I am just wondering whether there is any way of acting it out, so that one can incorporate that material more effectively, more fully. Do you see what I'm getting at?

Susiddhi: In terms of the Shadow, Jung described it as the part of you which is awkward; you don't feel in charge of certain situations, you don't feel at home, you feel uneasy, nervous, awkward. I suppose you could deliberately put yourself into situations and be very aware of how you do feel.

S: That's true, yes, indeed.

Susiddhi: Like giving a talk; if you're extremely nervous giving a talk, I think that's part of the effect of it, that you are aware of your nervousness and you ask yourself why. And in different situations like that.

S: I suppose making offerings is a sort of acting out, because one doesn't usually do that sort of thing. You're giving expression to your devotional feelings which very often are unacknowledged. There is also sort of acting; there is even sort of dressing up. Some men enjoy dressing up in women's clothes. Well, there must be a reason for that. There is probably

a perfectly sound and healthy reason - provided they don't wear them all the time! Anyway what are men's clothes? What are women's clothes? It's all just relative, it's all culturally conditioned. In traditional China, formerly, women wore trousers and men wore skirts; and in the West in recent times it has been the other way round. So are trousers an essentially masculine garment, and is a skirt an essentially feminine garment? How can one really say?

Maybe the colour of the clothes one wears is a bit significant. People are a bit more colourful in the Movement now than they used to be; but the women are definitely still more colourful than the men. It was very noticeable on the women's retreat down at Rivendell. I know that the women are aware that Bhante likes to see them dressed brightly and not in a slovenly fashion. But even allowing for that - going from Pakmaloka to Rivendell was quite a little experience in that respect! Going from all the browns and greys and blacks to all sorts of beautiful diaphanous colours; some of them were changing almost every day; they go on retreat with quite

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a lot of clothes! It is probably quite a good sign.

(Some words missing on change to Side 2.)

Dharmapriya: .... Order members.

S: Yes, but sometimes without being very sensitive to the situation that they are in, because sometimes they wear them in the Muslim style or wear green ones which are usually worn by Muslims! Or they wear those which have got that sort of pattern of squares, which is very vulgar by Indian

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standards; quite low-class people wear that type of lungi: Bombay dadas, you know, gunda(?) leaders and hooligan leaders, people like that, pimps and procurers. One has to be a little bit careful what sort of message is communicated by the garment you wear. In India, you can wear pink trousers, bright pink trousers, bright pink shirt; no one will turn a hair. But you try wearing bright pink trousers and shirt around Bethnal Green, for instance! It communicates a different sort of message. So you must there is a sort of symbolism of colours and maybe even of textures. You could vary your clothes and your colours according to your mood. There is a story - well, not a story, it is part of the biography - of Herbert Spencer. Apparently he was a bit of a clothing reform faddist, and he had a one-piece woollen suit, rather rough wool, and he only wore this when he was angry. And the ladies of his household called this his 'angry suit'. So if he came down to breakfast wearing his angry suit, they knew they were in for a difficult day. It is a very good way to alert people. Sometimes you don't know that someone is in a bad mood. If they were to wear an angry suit, you'd be on your guard! People are very sensitive. You can sometimes pick up on this, that people's mood is reflected in their clothing - perhaps quite unconsciously. Well, there is a long passage in Buddhaghosa about this, isn't there, which I sometimes refer to? But I do notice, both among men and among women, that where they are a bit colourful, red is a popular colour. Maybe this provides food for thought.

But what I have really been trying to get at is that we had better be very careful that

our approach to this archetypal material doesn't remain virtually intellectual. Otherwise it doesn't affect us in the way that it perhaps should. I have sometimes talked about us perhaps having more colourful Pujas - not just colourful, but colourful in the more symbolical

sense, or correlating the colour with the symbolism; and I have sometimes thought that it might be a good idea, if you are doing certain kinds of Puja, to change the colour of your dress; at least wear a different coloured blanket. If it is a Tara Puja, say, well, let everything be green or every

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thing white, or perhaps you should wear a green garment on that occasion, so that you really get into the mood of it. Perhaps we don't do things in this way sufficiently. Perhaps our approach is still predominantly mental.

Kulamitra: In that connection, in the lecture you did equate dhaznepala, dakLnL, gazu and yedsn with those archetypes. So presumably one could do Pujas with devotion directed towards those figures. That would be a more active

S: Yes. But I think one would have to be able genuinely to feel that those figures genuinely had inspired that sort of feeling. You couldn't just borrow them from Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan culture, and expect to feel towards those figures what a Tibetan Buddhist feels. So I think we have a long search ahead of us. Some people respond quite strongly to the archetypal figures that one finds in Blake's works; to Lrizen, for instance, to Los - these are very powerful figures to which one can

respond.

Suvajra: Can I come back a bit to acting out? I wonder if there is any

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connection here between the Tibetan lama dances and the absorbing of archetypal material in the lives of people

S: But don't forget that there are two sides to the lama dances. On the one hand, there are the spectators, who are deeply impressed by them; they often are very impressive. I have seen them in Kalimpong. But then there is the lama himself, or whoever is actually dancing - that he impersonates these figures, so to speak, or identifies himself with them and dances that particular part. Certainly it has a powerful effect on him. So perhaps what I am saying is that we have to be not so much always spectators but actual actors or participants, more. We do lots of watching; but we don't do much else.

Suvajra: Do you think we could do acting out of incidents in the life of the Buddha?

S: I think we could. I think this has been done on occasion, hasn't it? I am sure it has a positive effect. Though it isn't perhaps quite the same thing, but, yes, it is the same kind of thing in a way. For instance, take this vexed question of the anima. Well, how do you act out your anima in order to integrate it? How would you do that? Would you take

up knitting? Well, what would you do? I suppose you could say you could  
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do the things that women usually do, but maybe that is an oversimplification. It wouldn't work quite like that. Anyway, it is something perhaps you can explore for yourselves.

Abhaya: Kulamitra has a question on the different levels of symbolism.

Kulamitra: In the lecture you bring out the parallels between the four main archetypes in the biography of the Buddha, Jung, Christianity and Tantric Buddhism: i.e. you seem to equate Mara, the Shadow,

Satan, the Dharmapala and so on, to the archetypes. Do you think you establish strongly enough in the lecture that these may be ordered in quite different ways at quite different

levels of experience?

S: No, I don't think I go into that at all. I think I was concerned just to establish a loose general correlation. Because, after all, from a Jungian point of view these are archetypes of the collective unconscious. They express themselves in different ways in different cultures, but are so to speak essentially the same archetypes. But I think that need not blind us to the fact that, as you say, the archetypes do exist on different levels.

Kulamitra: It struck me, anyway, that some of the differences were particularly significant. For instance, certain aspects of the archetypes called Christian seem quite unhealthy; you know, one aspect of Christ is at least Christ on the cross, which doesn't really seem to be very healthy. God can be the avenging father figure, and so on.

S: With regard to the - I mean, Jung goes quite a lot into the different types of anima. He says, I think there are four different types of anima; they are not equally positive, by any means. One could perhaps apply that to all the other archetypes of the collective unconscious. You could even, in theory at least, have a negative form of the Young Hero - the overbearing bully, as it were. This would be a distortion of the Young Hero archetype, a not very positive version of it. And, as regards the Wise Old Man, well, yes, you can have the tyrannical Jehovah, or you can have the nice, kindly, wise, grandfatherly figure, rather like Brahma.

Kulamitra: Taking the four together, in the lecture you also talked about this individuation process - and again, thinking about it in those terms, I couldn't help feeling the different sets from those different traditions had a different sort of meaning in that way. For instance, I couldn't help thinking that the Christian set - well, it was not a path

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at all, it was a wrong path, it couldn't really be seen as a process of individuation. But it struck me that perhaps in the same way that you can have a sort of mundane Eightfold Path and a Transcendental Eightfold Path, that even if you succeeded in the individuation process using the Jungian version of those archetypes, you would really only just be at the beginning of the further individuation process, using, say, the dharmapala, dakini, etc.



S: Well, perhaps one can think of the path or the individuation process in terms of a spiral - well, we have the Spiral anyway; and you would go over the same ground, as it were, at progressively higher levels. Perhaps it is helpful to think of things in that way.

But to come back to this question of Christianity or the as it were Christian archetypes, again, they vary very much. I referred to paintings: some painters represent the same Christian archetype in a very positive way, others in a very negative way, or what to us is a negative way. For instance, some people do find the archetype or symbol of the Annunciation very positive, because the artist in some cases has extracted the positivity from that archetype and expressed it in those particular Christian cultural terms; another, perhaps, has not succeeded in doing that. In the case of the Crucifixion, you have got rather a difficult job, unless you go back to very early Christian art where the Crucifixion is not depicted realistically at all - where it evidently has some kind of symbolical significance; there is no dwelling upon naturalistic details.

Abhaya: A question from myself. In the lecture you pass quickly over the symbols of the bull and the begging bowl, and you imply that there is a lot of symbolism in them. The symbols themselves are very interesting.

ested in them. I wonder whether you have anything to say about them.

S: The begging bowl?

Abhaya: The begging bowl and the bull.

S: The bull~ of course, is a quite prominent animal in Buddhism. The Buddha is called 'the bull among men', *nazapungava*(?), just as he is called 'a lion among men', *nazascnta*. The bull symbolises the Buddha's birth. I have gone into this somewhere else, haven't I? The bull symbolises the Buddha's birth, because he was born under the sign of Taurus - according to some traditions, anyway - and in the same way the elephant symbolises

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the conception, the horse symbolises his going forth, and the lion symbolises the giving of the first discourse. I've gone into all this somewhere or other. Perhaps it was in India. Of course, in Zen you've got the Ox-herding pictures - not that the ox is quite the same thing as a bull; an ox is a castrated bull. We don't want any castrated bulls! You've got the Mithraic bull, haven't you? And you've got the Egyptian sacred bull - what was he called? Apis, was it Apis? The bull is one of the prominent animal figures in Buddhism. The bull is also the symbol of one of the four evangelists which one is that? It must be St. Luke.

Abhaya: I've just noticed, when we went over this material in pre-Tuscany, that no one seemed to respond at all to this particular symbol.

S: The bull?

Abhaya: When we went over each of them, there seemed to be no response at all.

S: People respond a bit to the horse, the windhorse, or the winged horse, even. But then, for the ancient Britons, I think, the horse was a sacred animal, and we do have the whitehorses or whatever you call them on the Berkshire downs; so perhaps there is a bit of a connection for English people with the horse. But the Bull? Maybe the Spaniards have a feeling for the bull. We shall see! We have a bit of a feeling for the phoenix, haven't we? It was D. H. Lawrence's symbol.

Sushiddhi: There was the Minotaur.

S: The Minotaur, yes. But he is not a very attractive symbol: half man and half bull, with the head of a bull.

Abhaya: He has to be destroyed, doesn't he?

S: He has to be destroyed, yes.

And then the bowl. I have talked recently about the begging bowl; there are quite a few legends about the Buddha's begging bowl and how it travels from place to place after his death. According to some accounts it is made of crystal, and according to others it is lapis lazuli, so it takes on the overtones of those particular semi-precious stones. There is a story or legend that after his Enlightenment, the gods of the four quarters came and each presented the Buddha with a begging bowl, so he had four bowls; so he just put them together and they merged into one bowl. This seems to me evidently of symbolical significance: integration, you know, the four quarters coming together. I wonder whether there is any

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connection in terms of symbolism between the Buddha's bowl and the Holy Grail, which links you up with your Arthurian cycle. I am quite interested in this, but I have never had time to go into it very much. I must say I personally respond more to the symbol, if it is a symbol, of the Buddha's begging bowl than to the bull. I can't work up too much enthusiasm for the bull - not too much for the horse, come to that. I think I rather prefer the elephant, because he is patient, he has to put up with a lot, you know! Perhaps I identify a little bit with the elephant, who knows? And he never forgets!

Different people are attracted by different animals, aren't they? In the past there were animal totems: people in particular tribes identified very strongly with the animal which was their totem, and of which, according to some authorities, they were supposed to be the descendants. The bear figures very prominently in primitive myth and legend. I can't say I have any feeling for the bear at all.

Dharmapriya: Do you think we should restrict our attempts to achieve a more-than-intellectual dealing with symbols just to the archetypes, or <extend them> also to symbols such as this? One reason I was thinking of just immediately is that in North America, in the many different summer camps, you often acquire a totem as children, such as the bear or the beaver, something like that, which very much becomes your symbol for the summer as children; it does leave quite an emotional mark.

S: Then we will have to be quite careful about that.

Dharmapriya: Not the rat, then!

S: What were you given?

Dharmapriya: It was the bear at one stage.

S: The honey bear! Or the little brown bear. Not Rupert the Bear! We all know whose totem Rupert is! Well, in my young days it was Bobby Bear. You don't remember him, do you? Bobby Bear and Tiger Tim ? Doesn't even Abhaya remember? (Laughter.) It does date you.

Abhaya: It really dates you, doesn't it?

S: It does! Yes, and Bobby Bear was featured in the Daily Akzald - or maybe that's why, the Daily Akzald has been defunct for <more than> a decade. It was one of the two Labour papers, both of which became defunct. I don't know why Bobby Bear came in a Labour newspaper! That may have appealed to something bearish about the workers, you know, growling and

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grumbling! Not that Bobby Bear was like that.

Then, of course, in the 2wtly Mi2zot we had other animal figures: we had Wilfred and his friends. You don't remember Wilfred? There were two penguin figures - what was that? There were Pip, Squeak and Wilfred. You don't remember them? Your education has been neglected! Sorry, no; Pip was a dog, who walked on his hind legs, and Squeak was a female penguin; and there was another character called Auntie, and she was Squeak's auntie, and she was quite a character. She was always defeating the machinations of Bolshevik spies, dropping bombs. That archetype had a slightly political slant. That was in the late 20s and early 30s. Oh yes, Wilfred was the rabbit, Pip the dog, Squeak the penguin. I remember these characters very vividly from my early childhood. Squeak, the female penguin, was always going in for new hats; supposedly a typical feminine trait. In those days, all my aunts and people like that always seemed to be buying new hats - every week they bought new hats and tried them on; so Squeak reflected this trait. So she was clearly a sort of anima figure. Pip of course, being a dog, and a masculine figure, he must have been the Shadow! Wilfred, I don't know; Wilfred was a rather juvenile rabbit. He might have been the Young Hero! (Roars of laughter.) There must have been some

thing like this lurking behind the figures in this little strip cartoon. I don't know what to say about Rupert the Bear. I shall keep my thoughts to myself. But, yes, these animal figures are quite interesting, because I suppose lurking in the collective unconscious are all sorts of experiences of animals.

Abhaya: The next question is from Virananda, on the central spot.

Virananda: This question is concerned with the central point, and the location of future

FWBO centres and retreat centres that kind

of subject.

S: You're not thinking of - what is it? Feng Shui(?)?

Virananda: I'm thinking along Chinese kind of lines. I have gone into it S: I have felt this about our land in Guhyaloka, because - I don't know if some of you have seen it - there is a great rock there; well, there's a photograph of this rock which Subhuti at once called the Lion Rock, and it really does look like a lion. It is about three times the height of Padmaloka. And some of the rocks there have this very definite individual character. I am sure a lot of people are going to project archetypes on to some of these rocks. It will be very interesting to see what exactly

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they do project. But anyway, let's hear what Virananda has in mind.

Virananda: Yes. In our study group we talked about the central point,

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the vaZzasana(?). and then another central point was mentioned,

the Tibetan Mount Kailas. And then we went on to start talking about places of power in general. I then remembered that Subhuti had recently called in water diviners at Guhyaloka, and I thought he might well end up by calling in a geomancer if a large building has to be built. So the question I have to ask you is: do you have any views about the usefulness of the Chinese and European traditions of geomancy?

S: I'm not sure about that. We all have definite feelings about definite spots. Perhaps it is wisest to be guided by those as well as by aesthetic considerations. I am very doubtful whether one can reduce these things to a science or a pseudo-science - well, perhaps it can be reduced to a pseudo-science, but whether you can reduce it to a science I am not so sure. I think water divining is something different. I mean, it does clearly work, and can be verified in a way in which perhaps geomancy can't. For instance, one idea in Chinese geomancy is that you shouldn't make streets in straight lines; you must make them crooked, because evil spirits always operate in straight lines. So if you put in lots of corners for them to go round, you have stymied them. So, perhaps evil spirits do go in straight lines; but is it possible to translate that in to a more understandable idiom? What do we mean by evil spirits going in straight lines? In a way, it seems logical because a straight line is sort of scientific. There are no straight lines in nature; so a straight line is something unnatural. Maybe an evil spirit is something unnatural, in a way, something against nature. Perhaps you shouldn't have such things as straight lines because it's not natural; follow nature; let's follow the contours of the ground, not sort of cut through them. Perhaps that's the sort of thing it means. Perhaps that has its own value.

But I think, with regard to Guhyaloka, it is a question of just staying there for a while and getting the feel of the land and almost intuitively and aesthetically deciding what would be appropriate where. I am not so sure I would trust a geomancer particularly, especially if he had studied geomancy as a sort of science and was applying rules, in a more or less

mechanical way. If he was a man with intuition who was operating through the medium of geomancy, this pseudo-science, that might be another matter, but one would need perhaps to know the particular person to find that out.

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Again, I think with water divining, it's different, because you can dig, and if you don't find the water, well, he doesn't know his job. He isn't what he purports to be.

Virananda: Have you ever known a Buddhist geomancer?

S: Not to my recollection, no.

: Isn't Padmapani interested in doing it?

S: In a sense, I have known <some>, because all Tibetan lamas believe in this and those lamas who decide upon the selection of a site for a monastery take into account various factors, and that constitutes a sort of geomancy. There was a bit of ridicule about this in Kalimpong, because a very great lama selected a spot for his monastery, and they hadn't even half built it when the army came along and took over the whole area; so it was wondered whether the lama really knew his stuff, so to speak. But perhaps even lamas can't foresee those sort of things. It was a good place for the army, too!

I think - I have been to Guhyaloka a couple of times for a few hours, but when I go there I think I will have a definite feeling for what ought to go where. I hope Subhuti's had some sort of feeling. I did talk with him about some things. For instance, I pointed out certain areas and said he was on no account to build on these areas - I could see they just weren't meant, so to speak, for that sort of purpose - and I pointed out other places where he could build. To me it seemed very obvious. I think it was partly aesthetic, I must admit.

I think nowadays people aren't very sensitive, perhaps mainly for economic reasons, to what goes with what, or what would be suitable where,

what would be appropriate in a particular place.

Virananda: But you wouldn't go on to say, then, that perhaps some kind of training in geomancy could rectify that insensitivity?

S: It might, but I think there would be the danger that some people at least would rely on the pseudo-science as though it was a science, and apply it in a purely mental way. If it sharpened their intuition, fair enough; that would be a good thing. But one would need to be quite sure that was in fact what happened. I think a lot of these pseudo-sciences do that: they provide a basis from which one's intuition can operate, or provide it with a language, even. I think astrology, perhaps, is a bit like that. I find it difficult to think of astrology as a science

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in the way that astronomy is. I think a lot of the old forms of alternative medicine are like that; I don't think they are fully scientific - I hope they're not! They have a quasi-scientific side, but I don't think they can be reduced to a science. So if the operator or the doctor hasn't got a developed intuition, they just have to fall back on the pseudo-science, which isn't really a science. It is just the same with the arts: if you don't have real genius, you just fall back on the rules. If you are a poet, well, you just start counting the syllables in the line and making sure your accents are in the right place, because your instinct doesn't tell you what's right: you have to apply the rules. Sometimes a consideration of the rules can stimulate your creativity, but only too often people make the observance of the rules a substitute for the creativity that they just don't have. So, yes, it is quite possible that there are people with an intuitive feeling with regard to buildings and gardens, for what should go where to produce an overall positive and pleasing effect, which is not just an aesthetic one but something more. Anyway, is that it?

Abhaya: Your other question, Virananda.

Virananda: The other one is: what is the significance of the Earth Goddess's vase?

S: I suppose it's the vase of plenty. It's the kalasa(?), the horn of plenty, a variant on that symbol; it is the cornucopia, from which she pours out. I think - yes, it's the kuTbha, the pot, which occupies an important place in many Hindu rituals. It's the cauldron, the magic cauldron. Sometimes the Grail has those overtones, doesn't it? Or even the Buddha's begging bowl on a higher level, so to speak.

Virananda: It could be, as it's a symbol, it could be interpreted in other ways, presumably, according to one's own personal response or experience.

S: Y-yes, that is true - but one can't make any symbol mean anything. It can also be the womb, I suppose. It could be a symbol of the earth itself. It could be a grave, it could be a cave, it could be anything hollow and empty - or full, as the case might be. It could be the firmament.

Virananda: Someone suggested that it could be a life philtre that she is offering.

S: A life filter? Filter or philtre?

Virananda: Philtre.

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S: Is she offering it?

Virananda: Well, that's the impression that we had, yes. We all felt that she was offering it.

S: Yes. Well, perhaps she is.

Abhaya: The last question is from myself. Towards the end of the lecture you say, about the archetypes: 'All are present within us; we are present in them. We share them, they share us.' The language here suggests mutual inter- penetration rather than two discrete worlds between which, so to speak, we commute. Recently you have also implied that, though we do not realise it, we inhabit both worlds equally. Would you care to expand on this?

S: I think at the time I was concerned that people shouldn't just oversubjectivise the archetypes, think of them just as something within themselves, in a quite superficial sense. As, say, with the Bodhisattvas, it is important to recognise that they do have, in a sense, an objective existence. They are subjective and objective at the same time, one could say. I think I was mainly concerned at the time to emphasise simply that point - that they were in you, that is subjective, but you are in them, that is objective. When you say that 'they are in you' you are treating them as something subjective; when you say 'you are in them' you are treating them as something objective. And obviously the subjective and the objective do interpenetrate, they are mutually dependent. I think that is all I was really getting at. Does that lead to any further point?

Abhaya: Well, I linked it up with what you said on a recent Q & A, where you said that, although we don't actually realise it, we inhabit both worlds equally. You were talking about the archetypal world, I presume, and the world of sensuous delight?

S: I think I was making a slightly different point: for instance, it's like - what do you call them? - waves, you know, when you see colours or hear sounds, you are only perceiving quite a narrow band in the total spectrum. You are being bombarded by all these other waves, or whatever they are. But you're not perceiving them. So it is as though you are living in the midst of, you could say, all sorts of colours and all sorts of sounds which you cannot perceive or pick up, and in the same way, you are living in the midst of worlds, planes of being, which you cannot perceive, because

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you are not so to speak tuned in to them. I was thinking along those sort of lines.

I don't think I've got any further thoughts on the question at the moment. Maybe my mind just isn't working. It's the end of the day; it could be as simple as that! If it was early morning I might be able to think up something. Also perhaps it's not a topic I have recently given any particular thought to.

So much for archetypes. What is it tomorrow?

: The Tibetan Book of the Dead.

S: Right well, more archetypes, I suppose. But I think the most important point that has emerged this evening is that I think we need to enact the archetypes more, for want of a better way of putting it. I am not necessarily saying that we should literally act them out in a drama form, but that we shouldn't simply study them mentally. We have got to find some way of coming

into closer contact with them. It does just occur to me that

masks are a good thing in this connection: you know, in the lama dances the dancers are masked. Masks, or masked figures, seem to exercise a quite peculiar effect. Supposing one of you went out and put on a colourful mask and then came back, and no one knew who it was, it would create quite an odd impression, it would have quite an odd effect on everybody; there is no doubt about it. And suppose two of you came in and enacted some little scene, or if you perhaps approached some of the people who didn't have masks, it could have a very odd effect. Especially if you had, say, big teeth and things like that; a red tongue hanging out, big bulging eyes; or if you were about two feet higher than everyone else, mounted on stilts; or somebody else sort of sitting on your shoulders and wearing a great big mask. I saw this in Kalimpong when they had a big lama dance, as we would call it, when there were these giant figures which I suppose were one lama sitting on the shoulders of another, so that they were practically twice as tall as an ordinary man and the upper halves had proportionately big masks; they really produced a quite eerie effect, it was quite strange. Of course, you knew it was men dressed up, but the effect was produced none the less. In other words, your rational mind is just bypassed, much as the Tibetan music bypasses the rational mind - it bypasses the rational mind - it bypasses the ordinary emotions, even, and just directly touches some deeper level, for want of a better term.

Mahamati: Bhante, at our study group a number of us were quite moved by  
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the symbol of the ladder comes down from the Heaven of the Thirty-three gods. We were reflecting on the symbol of the Spiral, and although the Spiral plays an important part doctrinally in your teaching, we haven't actually made that into a symbol.

(?Words missing as tape changes.) S: Of course, one doesn't make symbols; symbols emerge. But that is an interesting point, nevertheless. We don't actually encounter spirals in nature, whereas you do encounter ladders. A ladder, I suppose, is a variation on the spiral theme. In the case of the Abhidharma legend, you have this stairway between heaven and earth. I have talked about that somewhere, I am sure. There is Jacob's ladder in the Bible, with the angels ascending and descending. What other ladders are there?

Abhaya: Blake had a spiral with angels going up it.

S: That's true, he does. There is an illustration, a painting, in a book which I have, a quite beautiful painting. A spiral with figures going up it, I think it is, against a background of a deep blue sky with stars. But ladders - any other ladders?

Susiddhi: Isn't there a ladder to do with the Book of Mormon?

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S: I don't remember. Susiddhi: Isn't it an angel coming down with the Book of Mormon, with the gold plates?

S: He did bring the gold plates. I don't remember anything about a ladder, though you may well be right.



Virananda: There is a ladder in Tippett's opera 'A Midsummer Marriage', and also I think Mozart's 'Magic Flute' is sometimes staged with ladders.

S: Not a very archetypal context, though.

Kuladeva: DG YOU think there is any significance - you mentioned the ladder, you also mentioned the tree, both bridging heaven and earth, but ladders seem to come down from above, whereas trees come up from underneath. I notice also the Tower of Babel, which is a sort of ladder; that is destroyed by God because it is built from below. DO YOU think there is any significance in that, that ladders come down from above rather than up?

S: Well, do ladders come down from above?

Kuladeva: Well, the ones that have been mentioned bridging heaven and earth.  
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S: In the case of Jacob's ladder, is it actually said that it is let down? In Jacob's dream he merely sees that the ladder is there. In our experience, we manufacture a ladder on the earth and then we put it up, don't we, and then we climb up it? The Tower of Babel is supposed to have had some connection with the ziggurats of Babylonia. There was a - you could call it a spiral stairway; some of them were in fact cylindrical and others square, but there was this processional path, right the way round and leading up to the shrine at the top.

Perhaps we should make a bit more of the ladder, the Abhidharma ladder. There are Tibetan thankas depicting this scene; it is depicted in Buddhist art everywhere. It is not one of the most common episodes from the Buddha's life, but I have seen quite a few representations, quite a few thankas.

Virananda: There is a painting by Burne-Jones in the Tate, I think, of pairs of females, all identical, going up a stone staircase.

S: Are you sure they are not coming down? 'The Golden Stairs' it is called.

Virananda: Yes, coming down. That is a very beautiful picture.

S: Yes. I remember that very well, because there was a reproduction of it in the classroom when I was a child. But I have seen it since. I think I have seen the original, too. Anyway, the symbol of the ladder is quite an inspiring one.

Dharmaloka: You said one doesn't find the spiral in nature, but isn't the plant a very typical symbol of the spiral because usually the branches are

S: Yes, that's true.

Dharmapriya: Actually, at the microscopic level, DNA is a spiral, the fundamental molecule, a double spiral. And seashells.

S: That's true, whorls, yes.

Dharmapriya: And oalaxies!

S: Ah, galaxies, yes! Prakasha: Lots of spirals in nature.

Dharmapriya: But, Bhante, there is the symbol of the staircase to the gods, I mean the ziggurat, the pyramid - evenmore obvious with the mexican pyramids.

S: Yes, again there was the shrine or altar at the top, wasn't there?

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Dharmapriya: And it seems like it's not as it were an undisputed image; there is - I can't remember which Greek myth it is, but someone is thrown down for attempting to climb Olympus

S: That was Vulcan, Hephaistos; not for climbing Olympus, he was thrown out.

: He was thrown out for being born from Hera. She did it out of jealousy because he gave birth to Athene without her

S: He assisted Zeus in giving birth to Athene. He clothed Zeus's forehead and released Athene. There is a beautiful passage in Milton describing his fall. He describes him under the Latin name of Mulciber.

But the ziggurats are supposed by some to have been artificial hills, and in many cultures the gods are imagined to inhabit the summits of hills or mountains. In the Bible, the Psalms, there is a verse 'I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help,' because God lives at the top of a hill. Also the Bible refers to 'the high places of the heathen', high places meaning the tops of hills or mountains where they had their heathenish altars and so on. The same thing in the case of Mount Kailas, the gods live at the summit, don't they?

: Slightly nearer to home, there is Glastonbury Tor, which is...

S: That's true, yes. I recently read an article about that which attempted to trace a sort of spiral maze type of path, winding eight times round. I believe in Dante there is the Mount of Purgatory; I believe it has a spiral path around, but I won't be quite sure of that. Certainly Dante ascends the Mount of Purgatory.

So perhaps we do need symbols - it is not quite correct, I think, to say symbols for the Spiral, because there really you are regarding the symbol as a sort of illustration, whereas it is something in its own right as it were, that doesn't require elucidation because it speaks its own language - but we need the spiral as embodied, so to speak, in something concrete. We don't at present have that. Perhaps it will, as I said, take time to emerge. Perhaps you could even have little model Spiral Paths, like we have model stupas - you know, little mountains with spiral paths going round them, with perhaps a Buddha seated at the top. Or five Buddhas. Or perhaps, best of all, we need to buy a small mountain somewhere, with a

Buddha shrine at the top, and have a pilgrim path up. They could do that every morning before breakfast. I'll have a look around at Guhyaloka and see if we have got a little peak that we could go round.

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Of course, Borobodur is also a spiral; you can circumambulate it, climbing from one level to another, so that means really the path round it is spiral. I suppose we could eventually develop something like that.

Perhaps we'll leave it there until tomorrow. With luck, more archetypal symbols!

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## DAY FIVE

(Beginning not recorded)

Suvajra (speaking): (Question asks for Bhante's view of the Secret Doctrine of the Tibetan Book of the Dead. (?book title) ...by Dettler Ingelaan(??) - this one. I've been meaning to read this for a while, but I wanted to know what you actually thought of it.

S: I read it some time ago. It seems to me quite good, inasmuch as he did make it clear that what we know as the Tibetan Book of the Dead is one of a whole cycle of works, and there is quite a bit of general information about the contents of this kind of literature. So I think it is quite a useful book.

Suvajra: Are there any others which have come out since that lecture that you particularly recommend?

S: Which one was that?

Suvajra: Since this lecture appeared, 19 years ago, are there any more books in the area of Tibetan Books of the Dead?

S: There is one - not exactly on the Tibetan Books-of the Dead but on the subject of death in general, after-death experience, from the Tibetan Buddhist point of view. I can't remember its title. It is a fairly recent publication. I think the material is translated by Glenn Mullin, who has translated quite a number of books.

: Death and 2gtng: the TLbetan TzadLtion.

S: Ah, that's the one. That's quite interesting, too, I think, quite useful. And then that little book on Rebl2th and the Weste2n Buddhcst

contains some material which is relevant here. Then there is, of course, Philippe Kapleau's little book The Wheel of Death. We used to stock it.

I don't know whether we still do stock it at LBC. I can't think of any other titles.

Abhaya: The second question is also from Suvajra, on the Rinchen Termas.

Suvajra: It's a sort of information question, this one. You mentioned the 64 volumes of the Rinchen Termas, and that one of your teachers in Kalimpong had this. I wanted to know which teacher was it who had it and also are there any more copies available in the West, do you know?

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S: There are quite a few copies available now. At that time there were only two. One was in Rome and I forget where the other was, probably in London. It was Gujong(?) Rinpoche who had that set. But I gather that

there are quite a few sets available now in the West. I am sure, for instance, that Tarthang Tulku has one: the Collected Termas.

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Abhaya: And the third question from Kulamitra on the 'iron birds' prediction.

Kulamitra: What is the textual source for Padmasambhava's prediction that 'When iron birds fly my teachings will come to the West'?

S: No source is ever given, which is rather interesting! I mean, I have never found a single reference to the source. I have become a bit suspicious about those prophecies, to be a bit honest. It is 'When iron birds fly in the sky my teaching will go to the country of the red-faced people.' That is supposed to be the full version. There are several interpretations. Of course, I did hear originally that this applied to Tibet, because the Tibetans, in their pre-Buddhistic days, painted their faces bright red, apparently. But then, later on, it was said that the 'red-faced people' are Westerners. Karmapa apparently applied it to the Red Indians - at least, when speaking to the Red Indians he did! But I have become a little suspicious because, as I said, this prophecy is quoted in one form or another by so many authors, but no one ever gives a source. I would rather like to know that source.

Kulamitra: As far as you can recollect, had you actually heard that prophecy before the great wave of Tibetan teachers fled after the Chinese invasion? Or do you think they have just made it up?

S: I think I heard it before. I think I heard it in Kalimpong; but not to the extent that I have heard it since. It might be interesting to ask a Nyingmapa scholar where it comes from. There may be an actual source, in which case it would be interesting, but it is a little odd that they don't actually ever give the source. It is as though no one has actually encountered it in a book, but everybody has encountered it at second or third hand.

Kuladeva: It is interesting how these prophecies sometimes get passed around, isn't it? There is another one about the 14th Dalai Lama.

S: Which one is that?

Kulamitra: That the 14th will be the last.

S: Oh, right, yes. Well, of course, sometimes it used to be said that this one is not necessarily the 14th, because some don't recognise the sixth Dalai Lama as a real Dalai Lama, so that this one is not really the 14th but the 13th.

: I saw a book quite recently - it has only just come out called The Last T)alaL J>arna.

Dharmapriya: The iron bird prophecy - I don't think it's unique to Tibetan Buddhism. There was a very similar one current among Yemeni Jews about the fact something like 'When iron birds fly in the sky you shall go back to the Promised Land,' and this was used to persuade them in the 1950s to get on planes and go back to Israel instead of being massacred in civil war.

S: I have heard a more extended version of the Tibetan prophecy. I think it was to the effect 'When iron birds fly in the sky, and when carriages are drawn by iron horses' - I haven't heard that one so frequently, but I have come across it.

Abhaya: The next question is from Kuladeva on the three Tantric initiations.

Kllladeva: In the lecture you said that YOU would have liked to say something

about the three Tantric initiations. For the sake of clarification, is there anything you could say about this in relation

to the Bardo Thodol?

S: I am not sure, I can't remember why I spoke of the three Tantric Initiations - oh, perhaps I was referring not to initiations in the sense of wong but in the sense of wong, lung and tc(?). I think maybe that is what I was referring to. Wong is abhiseka, and the lung is the explanation of the text - no, not explanation, the lung represents the reading of the text and therefore authorising you to study or practise it; and the tc is sort of additional verbal explanations. I think I must have been referring to the three Tantric initiations in that sense. But if you think of initiation as wong, well, there are four; or there are six or so, and so on. I am not sure what I was thinking of there.

Kulamitra: To be more specific, I think in the lecture you said that the last three bazdos correlate the three kayas and the three Tantric initiations, but you didn't have time to go into it.

S: Ah. In that case it wouldn't have been wong, lung and tc. It must have been the initiations of body, speech and mind; because the three

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kayas correspond to body, speech and mind, and represent them in their thoroughly transformed form, one might say. And the Tantric initiations are held to effectuate or speed

up that process, the process of the transformation of one's mundane, body, speech and mind into the body, speech and mind of a Buddha. And that is correlated with the bazdo state in the sense that it is said that in the batdo state you would have an experience of the Dharmakaya, then of the Sambhogakaya and then, of course, of the Nirmanakaya in the sense of the particular physical body into which you were then reborn. Well, in the case of a Buddha it is Nirmanakaya, in the case of an ordinary person it is just an ordinary body. But the state of the Sazdo is correlated with the dream state and also with the Sambhosakaya. So inasmuch as there is a correlation of Tantric initiations with those three bodies, indirectly there is correlation of Tantric initiations with the bazdo state as well as the states before and after the ba2do state. think I was thinking of those correlations.

Abhaya: The next question is from Tejamitra on the vast literature on death referred to.

Tejamitra: That has been answered on Suvajra's question.

Abhaya: So we come to Kuladeva again, a question on Eastern and Western attitudes.

Kuladeva: At the beginning of the lecture, you refer to two attitudes towards death, an Eastern one and a Western one. How valid do YOU think those stereotypes are now?

S: Well, East and West do represent quite big generalisations. But if one thinks, say, just of England and India, there are very big differences. One can see that if one goes to India and just lives and works among our ex-Untouchable friends. I mean, death is a much more common occurrence. Just reading through today's Shabda, one of our Indian Order members reports in that his daughter had died, and he passes straight on to the next thing he wants to say. No doubt he was quite distressed by his daughter's death, but he is not dwelling on it. He is taking it in his stride, perhaps to a much greater extent than people would be able to do here, because death is something that occurs, so to speak, much more frequently. Expectation of life isn't so long. Children especially - there are many of them and some of them do die. And, of course, there is still the fact that funerals are comparatively public affairs, and so are cremations, and bodies are still exposed - well, the faces are exposed, as the corpse is carried through

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the streets, in a way that does not occur here. Think of wh2t happens at the burning ghats. The Government of India is having quite a big problem at the moment: they are trying to clean up the river Ganges, and they have given a British firm the contract, £125 million, to clean up the Ganges, and to prevent people throwing dead bodies or half-burned dead bodies into the Ganges. And they are finding it extremely difficult to stop this, virtually impossible so far. So you couldn't think in this country of just dumping half-burned or unburned dead bodies into the river. But this is what happens there. People are much more in contact with death. We tend to try to hide it away as much as we can.

It may not be that Indians deliberately adopt this sort of attitude. It may be force of circumstances, to some extent. For instance, why do they half-burn bodies? Well, they can't really afford the firewood to burn them properly. So it is to some extent the product of economic circumstances. But the result is that people are brought into closer contact with

death. In the same way, no one wants their children to die, but a higher percentage of them do die; but again, that is due to social and economic and general medical conditions out there.

So I think the net result is that, due to their greater familiarity with death, they do just accept it, I won't say more easily, but perhaps they are better able to cope with it than we are sometimes. So I think certainly, as between England and India, these stereotypes, though they are stereotypes to some extent, do represent an actually existing state of affairs, or two rather different actually existing states of affairs.

Kuladeva: The thing that I was wondering about most was that - I wouldn't disagree that the Western attitude is characterised by fear; but you said that the Eastern attitude was characterised more by a certain looking forward to old age and death.

S: I'm not sure - did I say 'looking forward'?

Dharmapriya: In some cases, you said. S: I think, yes, in some cases. You can look forward to death negatively as well as positively. For the very poor and for those who just have to go on working right up to the hour of death, almost, they can look forward to death in the sense that it is looking forward to release from a very difficult and even miserable existence. But I think older people in India in more well-to-do circumstances - perhaps in different parts of the Buddhist world, too - with their faith in rebirth, can in a sense look forward  
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to passing on. They have done their bit so far as this life is concerned, and they are beginning to feel their bodily decrepitude, and they don't mind thinking that they are going to die and presumably be reborn. So I think some do look forward to death in that way. Of course, a lot don't. Certainly, people who are not yet nearing the end of their lives, as far as one knows, don't very often positively look forward to death. But I think the Indian on the whole has a more philosophic attitude, for want of a better term.

I was thinking just now of the American - what do they call them? they have morticians, don't they, who will sort of beautify you so you look good in your coffin and all that sort of thing. They just don't have that in India. So why all this concern to beautify the dead, to try to make the dead look as though they were actually alive? It is as though you can't accept the fact that they are dead. So perhaps this does represent a sort of fear of death, wanting to think that your 'loved one' is only asleep, not really dead.

I noticed this, I remember, years ago when I was in Kalimpong and an Englishwoman whom I knew, who was a Buddhist, died. To cut a long story short - it is an interesting story, but I won't tell it now - we laid her out, on the ping-pong table actually - that was the biggest one we had, in the games room--at our YMBA - and quite a few people came to pay their last respects, as it were. Quite a lot of my Nepalese and Tibetan and Indian students came, and they just went and had a look at her and took it as something quite ordinary; but she had also known some European missionaries, and three or four of them came. So I gave them a cup of tea and then I said, 'Would you like to come into the other room and have a last look at Miss Barclay?' So they said, 'Oh no, no, thank you!' They were really quite uneasy. And it struck me the difference between their attitude, though they were missionaries, and that of my not

particularly religious-minded students, who were either Hindus or Buddhists. Though they were sorry that poor old Miss Barclay was dead, they certainly felt no uneasiness in being in the same room with the body and just having a look at her. They were quite interested in seeing how she looked. I remember she had a rather stern expression on her face. She was a woman of about 55. And, fortunately, she became a Buddhist about six months before she died, so I was able to claim the body - the missionaries tried to set hold of it - and have her cremated in a Buddhistic manner.

But this little incident stuck in my mind. I don't want to give it  
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too much importance or generalise from it too much, but it did seem quite typical of the Western attitude, and the fact that they were missionaries and presumably religious-minded people only served to highlight that fact.

Abhaya: The next question is Kulamitra's, on your evaluation of the teura tradition.

Kulamitra: I just wondered how you interpret and evaluate the tetma tradition.

S: I really don't know. It is a very interesting question, isn't it? There are a few parallels; for instance, there is the Book of Mormon, which was mentioned the other evening. That seems to have been a sort

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of teura, if you accept the Mormon version of how it was found. An angel hid some gold plates, and he also hid a sort of pair of magic spectacles which one needed to read the inscriptions and interpret them. And the prophet Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, found the gold plates and the magic spectacles and, putting on the spectacles, he was able not only to see the writing but understand what it meant and write it out as it were in full. This is exactly how some teonas originated - minus the magic spectacles.

I have discussed this with some lamas, and I think I have seen something about it in writing, too. Apparently not all tetmas are found actually fully written out. Sometimes tetmas are found in the form of apparently unintelligible symbols written on something; and then a tezeon is not simply one who finds these, who discovers them, but who is also able to read them, to translate them, so to speak, into, or reduce them to, ordinary language and ordinary writing, very much as Joseph Smith did.

And another parallel I found was in Swedenborg. Have you heard of Swedenborg? Some of you know of him through Blake's writings and Blake's life. In his Reaven and Rell, there is a very interesting passage where he describes writing in heaven, and he says that one form of angelic writing is in the form of symbols which contain an enormous amount of meaning, which can actually be written out at length in the ordinary way. So this seemed a quite interesting parallel.

Of course, there are many different kinds of tetmas. Some are called mind tetmas - that is to say, there are some tetmas which, putting it perhaps rather crudely, Padmasambhava hid on other planes, and these can be perceived by yogis or meditators in their meditations,



and they transcribe them from that meditative experience. So those also are regarded as tetmas.

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So it is very difficult to know how to evaluate, in a sense. I think one is left with only one thing to do, which is to judge, if that is the right word, every teu7a or every writing or document claiming to be a teura, on its own merits, and in accordance with its agreement or disagreement with basic Buddhist teachings.

Kulamitra: I was thinking more of what you might call the historical side, because in our group one person at least, though they could accept the teachings of those tev7as - the ones that we know of - found it impossible to believe that Padmasambhava had hidden anything which had been in any sense literally discovered, and I wondered whether you

S: I don't find that completely incredible, not completely. Because there is a sort of parallel in China. There was that famous episode of the burning of the books. The founder of the Han dynasty, I think it was, wanted history to begin with his reign, and he burned all the books that he could find; and a lot of scholars hid their books in crevices in the wall, and in between walls and all that sort of thing; I don't know whether they hid <any> in caves, but they certainly did hide away. And, of course, many years later, after his death, these were taken out. And, of course, there is a vast literature, apparently, in Chinese, consisting of works purporting to have been taken out after having been concealed in this manner. Modern scholars regard many of them as forgeries.

I don't think it's impossible that Padmasambhava could have hidden texts in odd corners of the monastery or even in caves. It's a little farfetched, I must admit, but it is not altogether impossible. I suppose, from a scholarly point of view, one would need to examine the tev7us and see whether their language was the Tibetan, say, of the ninth or eighth century, or whether it was the Tibetan of the 14th or 15th or 18th centuries, when they were taken out; because there surely would have been some linguistic development during that period.

Kulamitra: I don't think that would work, from what you said earlier; because, say it had been found in a sort of secret language, it would be put into the Tibetan of that <time>.

5: Yes, in the case of those teu7as it wouldn't work, but there are some which were apparently taken out ready written, so it would certainly apply in the case of those te&ras.

: Some Western scholars seem to be quite sceptical about the

tes7a tradition.

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S: In what way?

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: Well, the basis of the argument is that Buddhism was introduced into Tibet with

texts translated into Tibetan at the time of Samye(?). Some people even dispute the existence of Padmasambhava. Buddhism was subsequently persecuted at the time of Langdarma, and it only really survived in the border areas. Later on there was the New Way, with the Sakyapas, Kagyupas and Khadampas, and they had new translations with Sanskrit originals, and ordinary Tibetans then asked the old lamas where their Sanskrit originals were. They didn't have any, so they produced so-called teura texts based on the new translations. But I have heard that, since the Cultural Revolution, or since the softening up after the Cultural Revolution, various Tibetan Buddhist texts have been found hidden in caves and places like th2t.

5: Yes, as I said, I would not dismiss the teura tradition completely, by any means, though that is not to say that each and every text that passes as a teura is necessarily such. In any case, we have to assess each individual work on its own merits. No one can say: 'Look, this is a teura; it is in Padmasambhava's own words, you've got to accept it.' This would not be a Buddhist attitude. If we are asked to examine and try even the Buddha's words, as gold is tried by fire, well, what <need> to speak of the words of any other teacher, or of the words of the teures?

Kulamitra: I was under the impression that there had been criticism from some of the other Tibetan schools of Buddhism.

S: Yes, there were definitely some Gelugpa scholars who scoffed at the authenticity of the teuras quite openly.

Kulamitra: But apparently there are even Gelugpa teD7as. And I read a small pamphlet by Janyeng Kemse(?) called Open~ng of the 2~aura, in which he writes about Tibetan Buddhism generally and all the teuras. He says that they do actually stand up on their own merits.

5: Of course, he is believed to have taken out several te&ras.

Abhaya: The next question is from Suvajra on Padmasambhava and the Tibetan Book of the Dead.

Suvajra: You sav in this lecture that the Tibetan Book of the Dead is

- I can't remember the exact words, but you give it a very high place within Buddhist tradition as being quite profound in the area of death. We are told that Padmasambhava hid this

—  
text because it wasn't suitable to be received at that particular

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t i mo hl It we sre al sn told that at least 25 of his disciDles

were fairly highly attained disciples. So if the text was hidden, and not available to those disciples, what are we doino with it now?

S: I am not sure that we are to understand that the teaching was not available to any of his disciples. They might have been given the essence of the teaching <orally>. Padmasambhava

might have foreseen that the tradition would die out and wanted to preserve it for future generations, and therefore hid the book. One could look at it like that. And as for people at the present time not deserving, so to speak, the Tibetan Book of the Dead, of course they don't! - but the Tibetans seem to make quite a lot of play nowadays with this idea of simply sowing seeds, and they have justified the giving of all sorts of advanced initiations to all sorts of unqualified people on those grounds, that they are sowing seeds at least; which is very different from their previous attitude. I am not altogether convinced by this 'sowing of seeds' argument. I think it tends to debase the Dharma and cause people to undervalue it.

Suvajra: Do you think there might be an argument for saying that his disciples may not have received that teaching of the Tibetan Book of the Dead, and it was to be kept for a time when there were even more advanced disciples than those he had?

S: Well, presumably, all of Padmasambhava's personal disciples got what they personally needed. So perhaps there was no one who needed that particular teaching. Or perhaps they got it in some other form. It is very difficult to speculate.

Abhaya: The next question is from Dharmadhara on suicide.

Dharmadhara: (I'm not proposing to do anything!) It is in three parts. First: is the consciousness of a suicide likely to experience hardship as a result of taking his life,

and is there an equivalent in Buddhism of Dante's Wood of the

Suicides, for example?

S: I suppose it depends very much on the state of the person committing suicide at the time of death. You can commit what is technically suicide in a way that is quite acceptable from the Buddhist point of view; I mean, for instance, if you just stop taking food, or even, perhaps, in some cases, if you burn yourself - doing it not just with a positive motive but perhaps

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even in a meditative frame of mind, as it seems some of the Vietnamese monks did who set fire to themselves. But that is perhaps a quite separate kind of case. Most people who commit suicide commit suicide in a very negative frame of mind. They commit it out of despair, out of depression, out of rage, out of jealousy, out of self-hatred, in order to punish somebody, etc. etc.; so if you die in that way, the consequences, at least the immediate consequences, cannot but be unpleasant. I imagine that after death someone who had committed suicide in that negative frame of mind would become either an asura-like being or a preta, or something of that sort. Of course, when I say that, the immediate, the short-term, effect would be unpleasant; but if that person had a residue of good karma, so to speak, because in the period before that unfortunate event they had led a reasonably ethical life, then the results of that karma would supervene upon the results of the unskillful karma of taking one's own life. But I think the immediate prospects for the ordinary suicide after death are not very happy.

Sometimes, of course, people take their own lives out of fear, fear of exposure, fear of being found out, inability to face the music, inability to face what people will think of them.

Dharmadhara: The second question; would there be any difference needed or advised in the approach of Order members towards the dead person's consciousness?

S: Well, I assume that the dead person's consciousness would need a lot of help, and a lot of support; so perhaps in a way one should just redouble one's efforts, whether in the way of directing metta or reciting the Vajra

sattva mantra, or whatever.

It does occur to me that if one wants to take this seriously, perhaps there should be some service, to use that word, by Order members only that is to say, not with the friends and relations. Because the friends and relations would be, presumably, in a very distraught and disturbed mental state, which would not help the general atmosphere. So no doubt there would have to be some kind of funeral ceremony with them present, but perhaps either immediately after that, preferably, or on some other occasion even, Order members should get together if they feel so disposed, to do something on their own, hopefully of a more powerful and concentrated nature; perhaps even keeping it up over a period of some days or even weeks - I don't mean all day, but for an hour or two every day - as long as one felt the need and was in a position to do that. Hopefully we don't have to deal with cases of this sort, but unfortunately suicides do occur,

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even among people known to us.

We should be, of course, very cautious about communicating to friends and relations of the deceased person what we feel about their fate or their state after death; we would have to be very tactful and diplomatic. Perhaps it is best to say 'Well, we don't really absolutely know, but we shall do our best for that person.' Sometimes people are very concerned, even in the cases where suicide is not involved, about the state of their deceased friend or relation, whether all is well with them. They sometimes need a lot of reassurance, if one feels in a position to give that reassurance that all is well with that departed person.

And the third question?

Dharmadhara: You've actually answered some of it.

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The third question: what is the sort of approach to take with the Buddhist family of a suicide, assuming they have a Christian

legacy of abhorrence of suicide?

S: Well, if they are Buddhists they will know that, according to Buddhism, the state after death of someone who has committed suicide is almost certainly not going to be a very happy one. So if they are Buddhists, and if they ask you about this, you cannot but acknowledge that. But one has to put it as positively as one can, perhaps adding that 'We do not really know; this is the general rule, but we don't really know in each individual case what someone's state is.' Again, say that 'We will do our best for them, direct our efforts towards

them and recite the Vajrasattva mantra on their behalf, as it were, and do whatever we can.' And perhaps add that 'In the course of that person's life, he or she must have performed some skilful actions; we shall rejoice in their merits to that extent, and-hope at least that the results of those positive actions on their part will help to support them in their present state.'

If the friends or relations are Christians, one can say: 'According to Buddhism, we certainly don't believe that the person who commits suicide goes to hell. We don't take that view. At the very-most they will go to a sort of purgatorial state, but there is certainly no question of hell, from a Buddhist point of view.' One can at least give that reassurance whether they can accept it or not. At least, perhaps, they will like to hope that, even if they are staunch Christians. Also sometimes if a friend or relation commits suicide, people will blame themselves or feel guilty, and you may have to deal with that as well.

There has been a bit on the radio recently about death and suicide.  
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There was a programme - I don't know whether it has already been broadcast or is to come - apparently a mother whose daughter aged 17 committed suicide has made a radio programme about that. I don't remember whether it is a radio programme or a TV programme, but she's made a programme about her daughter's death by suicide which took place quite a few years ago, in order to help other parents who may have to deal with this sort of situation, or may have to deal with children who have become mentally disturbed and perhaps are in danger of committing suicide. From the little bit I heard on the radio, a foretaste of it, she sounded a very ordinary woman, I think from the north of England, judging by her accent; the daughter I think committed suicide when she was 17. I don't remember the circumstances.

And there are of course quite a few suicides as a result of taking drugs, aren't there?

Abhaya: The next question is from Susiddhi on discarnate entities.

Susiddhi: In a real situation of advising a deceased person, one would only be going through the motions or, as you put it last night, applying the rules, unless one knew that the subtle body was present. How does one detect whether the subtle body is present or not?

S: I don't think it is a question of how. You do or you don't. I think quite a lot of people have had the experience of the deceased person or, if you like, their consciousness, being actually there. One thing I can tell you from my own experience: it is not a sensation of a disembodied, a literally disembodied, consciousness being there; it is, in a strange sort of way, the whole person who is there. It is as though - I mean the physical body isn't there but there is a subtle counterpart of that. They are just as complete after death as they were during life in that sense. I have had some quite odd experiences in this connection. I shall just mention one of them. Some of you may have heard it before, but never mind. Someone I knew in Brighton years ago died - have some of you heard this one? (Voices: Mm.) She and her husband used to run the Buddhist Society <there>. I used to go down there years and years ago; I knew them quite well. I used to go down on a Wednesday, once a month. One Wednesday evening I wasn't well, so I wasn't able to go down; I phoned. And Violet, her name was, she was about 78, a very active woman, took the class instead of me. She sometimes did take it. And apparently what happened was, she took the class downstairs in her house, and having taken the class came

upstairs to the sitting room; her husband went to get her a cup of tea, came back with the cup of tea, and she was dead. Just sitting there on the edge of the armchair, just sitting upright. She had just finished

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taking the meditation class and then she was, she was dead. So he phoned me, and I was invited down for the funeral - in fact, to conduct the funeral. So I went down a few days later, entered the same sitting room, and after a few minutes in came Violet, quite literally; not that I saw any apparition, but in came Violet just as usual; asked me how I was, sat down, and after a few minutes, left. Yes! And I have absolutely no doubt about the validity of that experience, because I experienced her as tangibly as I normally did. And I've had that sort of experience with other people, too.

So either you experience the entity, to give it that rather dreadful name, or you don't. But I think if you tune in and if you are at all sensitive and you are performing the ceremony sincerely, I think you will perceive something. Or some of you will, assuming the ceremony is not performed too many days after the death. This might even have been a full week, if I remember rightly; it was certainly several days at least.

Suvajra: Do you think it might depend on the temperament of the person whether they might perceive this or not?

S: The temperament of which person?

Suvajra : The person who is doing the perceiving, perceiving the dead person; whether they perceive that person or not. I'm thinking in terms of like Sariputta and Moggallana being different characters.

S: Well, I'm not particularly psychic by nature, but I have had a few experiences like that. I don't think you need to be particularly psychic, or anything like that. Violet herself, by the way, before she became a Buddhist, was a spiritualist. I don't know whether that had anything to do with it. There was still a little spiritualism mixed with her Buddhism. I knew her quite well, she was quite a good friend. Her husband, who was the same age, took it very well, and he refused to have any mourning at the funeral. His sons-in-law came in dark suits, and he sent them back home to change. He said he didn't want any dark suits or any mourning at Violet's funeral; it was quite out of place.

Abhaya: When you say she 'came in', do you mean she just appeared, or she came through the door?

S: Well, yes, she came through the door. You perceived her coming through

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the door; but not that you saw any apparition.

Abhaya: The door opened? She came in?

S: The door was already open, as far as I remember. (Laughter.)

Susiddhi: Did you see anything?

S: Oh, absolutely nothing. I didn't see anything at all.

Susiddhi: It is not a visual perception?

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S: No, it's not a visual or pseudo-visual perception. But you have none the less the vivid perception of that person. A presence, which is the presence of that particular person, exactly as they were, even dressed as they were, in life, even though, in a way, paradoxically, there is no actual visual image of any kind. It sounds strange, but if you have had the experience or do have it, you will know what I'm getting at.

Abhaya: Could it have something to do, Bhante, with the fact that you yourself may have developed a subtle body, and therefore someone who has developed subtle-body mastery over mind can perceive the subtle body of

S: It's not impossible, because she had a very odd experience with me once. I have just remembered it, since you've asked that question. Before we used to meet in her house, before I knew her very well, we used to meet in Brishton in the upstairs room of a tea shop; I think it was called the Tudor Tea Shop, so you can guess what sort of place it was! I think that the second or third time I had been down there, I went back to Violet's place, I think, for tea afterwards, or it may have been the next week she talked to me about it; but what she said was this - well, she asked me a question - she said: 'Bhante, I wonder if you can explain this. While you were speaking' - because I think I gave a talk before the lecture 'I saw a figure standing behind you, and I don't know who that figure was.' So I said: 'Well, you'd better describe the figure.' So she said: 'It was a man, and he was dressed in red; and he was wearing a strange kind of hat. And he didn't look Indian, but on the other hand he didn't look Chinese either; he was sort of half and half.' So you can guess what I thought. So I said: 'Well, that sounds like Padmasambhava to me.' So she said: 'I've never heard of Padmasambhava.' She wasn't really well read in Buddhism, certainly not Tibetan Buddhism; I don't think she had any interest in it. But her description tallied with the figure of Padmasambhava. So who knows? It's a very odd thing. She was, I think, a slightly

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psychically gifted person, but she said she saw this figure standing behind me, a little above me as it were, or perhaps it was a little taller, a foot taller - standing directly behind me while I was speaking. So maybe there was a sort of subtle body there, it is difficult to say. So perhaps I did have a sort of rapport with Violet.

On the other hand, I have had the same experience with other people with whom I didn't have any such rapport. I had it with Geoffrey Webster's mother when she died. In this case I'd never been to their house before. I'd met her only once. And I entered the room and I knew at once which chair she normally sat on because there she was sitting on it. So I told

Geoffrey and he said, 'Yes, that's the chair my mother always used to sit on.' And in the same way, the same vivid apprehension or perception of that particular person sitting there. In her case, she just sat, she didn't say anything, so to speak. In Violet's case, a sort of conversation went on without any words being pronounced in the literal sense: but she said, 'Oh, hello, Bhante, how are you?' - those actual words register, even though there is no sound.

So I think, if one is at all sensitive, if one carries out the funeral service or whatever - the nrtta bhavana, the mantra chantinn -sincerely and with proper concentration, I think you will feel some contact with that departed consciousness. Though, from what I have said, it's clear there isn't just a sort of disembodied consciousness in the literal sense; it is not something ghostlike floating around. It is that person, in the full sense.

Abhaya: The next question is from Dharmapriya on the correspondence of the death experience with the literal content of the text.

Dharmapriya SnW w9Seftil is readino this material from the Bardo Thodsl

tn n HPpH Wo.mtPrn Rt hist. niven that it is symbolic, including

the timing - the number of days? In other words, the dead person is seeing projected thought forms, but is he literally going to see Amoghasiddhi, and see him literally on the fifth day? Or would it be more useful to confine your advice to the basics i e remindin the deceased not to be afraid, to

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recognise the visions as projections? - possibly describino Amnnhn.qiddhi tn him might iust conFuse nim.

S: I think perhaps one should not take things too literally. One could perhaps even say that the departed consciousness, for want of a better Q a A ABP V/1/17

term, is aware of or receives your intention. He or she or it doesn't

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necessarily hear the word Amoghasiddhi as a sort of Sanskrit word and wonder what it means. The departed consciousness, one might say, receives and translates into his or her own language whatever it is that you mean by Amoghasiddi. Do you get the idea? You could carry out the ceremony, say, for a person who didn't know English, in English, and it would get to them, if there was that contact established between you. They would so to speak pick up on your intention, your thought form, to use that sort of Theosophical term. So you can speak in terms of Amoghasiddi if you like, but what will reach them is the idea of a fearless Buddha, a fearless principle, something spiritual which imparts fearlessness.

But I take your point about reciting the whole thing, etc. etc. I am inclined to think that one should concentrate on the ntfta bhavana, the recitation of the Vajrasattva mantra, and possibly a simplified version of the Book of the Dead, the Bardo Thodol. Certainly the root verses could very well be repeated over and over again. This is only a suggestion off the cuff;



you can use it or not use it as appears suitable. But you could have a session of nrtta bhavana, a session of Vajrasattva mantra, a session of repeating the root verses a number of times; and then, according to the time at your disposal, the same thing over again, and over again, possibly in relays of people.

Though, of course, I am not saying that it isn't good or helpful if a group of people, say a group of lamas, go through the whole traditional ritual over a period of 49 days. The departed consciousness will as it were translate - this might sound strange - they might translate the 49 days into their own time scale. You can't rule that sort of thing out. I think the main thing is that, whatever you do and for whatsoever period, you bear that person in mind, and have a positive attitude of wanting to help or to be supportive, and wish that consciousness well. In some cases the consciousness may not need any help from you, but wish that consciousness or that person well. This is really the essence of the matter.

If there is any sort of connection between you, whatever you 'say' that deceased person will 'hear', though they will probably hear it in their own way.

Kuladeva: What if the departed person is a Christian?

S: I don't think it makes any difference. Your intention will reach them. No difference at all.  
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Kuladeva: And that goes for reciting mantras?

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S: Yes, indeed. I'd go so far as to say that if a group of Christians perform a religious service with a good intention for a departed Buddhist, it cannot but be helpful in its own measure. One must not place too much importance on the form but on the mental attitude; because the departed Buddhist may have been a good friend of those particular Christians, they may have genuine feelings of good will towards him, whatever reservations they may have about him being a Buddhist. So any sort of funeral service or memorial service performed in his memory or on his behalf cannot but have a good effect. Of course, if they were so Christian that they believed that that Buddhist friend had, unfortunately, inevitably gone to hell, I doubt then whether they could help in any way. I think whatever feeling they had for him would be vitiated by their conviction that he had gone to hell well, they would believe, really, that he couldn't be helped, so they could only lament over him, so to speak, and that wouldn't help. But if they were liberal-minded Christians who didn't have that sort of conviction, I am sure that a service performed in the deceased Buddhist's memory, performed sincerely, would be of some help.

: Is place not going to matter too much either, physical distance?

S: It doesn't make any difference at all, for obvious reasons.

Dharmapriya: Based on this principle, isn't it then quite relevant, say, that people - sorry, putting it another way - many Order members don't, I assume, really have much of a

connection with the Vajrasattva mantra; they presumably have more of a connection with another practice. In that case, is it perhaps more appropriate for them to use a mantra which they themselves have more of an association with, so that it's actually more of a genuine feeling for that person?

S: That sounds quite rational, but I think actually not. Perhaps you could recite your own mantra to warm yourself up a bit, as it were. But I think if it's a funeral service, to use that term, performed by a number of you together, I know that the Vajrasattva mantra has its own value, because I have experienced that. I have used the Vajrasattva mantra on a particular occasion, which perhaps I have talked to some of you about, and, as far as I remember, I was not in the habit of reciting the Vajrasattva mantra; I must have known it to some extent, because at least I knew it by heart I think every Order member ought to be familiar with the Vajrasattva mantra,

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at least be able to recite it by heart, I think everybody is - but I think if you recite it with the consciousness that it is of special value, and you have a general idea of what it means, and if you bear the departed person in mind, I think that will be better than reciting another mantra, to the best of my knowledge.

: What about in the case of a deceased Order member? I remember when Vengisa died, it was felt that it was best to recite his mantra, the mantra of his practice.

S: Again, that's rational, because if one knows the deceased person's practice, it sort of reminds them, if they hear you, of their practice and puts them in touch with something spiritual and comforting. So, in the case of an Order member whose practice you know, by all means recite his mantra. But I would say recite the Vajrasattva mantra too, at a different part of the ceremony. I think this was in effect done, wasn't it?

: Mm. The Vajrasattva mantra was recited.

Abhaya: The next question is from Tejamitra on the clear white light.

Tejamitra: Immediately after death, does one's ability to 'hold on' to the experience of the clear white light correspond to one's

previous abilities in sanatha meditation, and does the ability to recognise it as your own true nature correspond to the extent

of your insight developed in your previous life?

s: Well, it must do. I have talked about this recently; I don't remember the connection. But I think we have to be quite careful how we evaluate or how we understand the statement of the Tibetan Book of the Dead that you experience the clear white light. If you experienced it fully, even for an instant, you would be Enlightened; there would be no question of a future rebirth. Or even if you experienced it to a very limited degree, well, you'd be a Stream Entrant. And very few people are born Stream Entrants. I think in the majority of cases, the

clear light of the Void is not actually experienced. So if it isn't actually experienced, what happens? What I personally believe - this is the conclusion I have come to - is that you sort of see it in the distance, to speak metaphorically, but you are not able to actually approach it and experience it. Now you could say that even seeing it in the distance is a sort of experience; in a way it is, but it is not the same thing as actually being right close up to the light and actually immersed in it. But I don't really see how

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you can experience the clear light of the Void in the full sense and also be reborn, at least not reborn as anything short of a Stream Entrant. But Reality is Reality, and the clear light of the Void is the clear light of the Void, and perhaps even a very distant glimpse would be enough to scare you out of your wits and send you scampering back into another womb.

So I think we have to be careful how we assess the words and the teachings of the Tibetan Book of the Dead, not take them always too literally. But certainly there is a very powerful spiritual experience of some kind, which most people are not able to bear. But, yes, if one has practised meditation, samatha and vipassana, during one's lifetime, one certainly stands a very much better chance of being able to assimilate at least something of whatever it is you experience at that time.

How are we going, by the way?

Abhaya: We are doing very well. We've got five questions left. Kulamitra has a question on correspondences between the white light and other things.

Kulamitra: Yes, this does actually follow on quite a lot from the last question.

Do the three bardo experiences of the moment of death, the after-death state in which you experience the visions, and the rebirth, correspond to the arupaloka, the rupaloka and the kamaloka, with liberation coming from recognising the phenomena of any level as one's own mind, but easier from that more refined state?

S: No, I don't think the initial experience of the pure white light corresponds to the arupaloka, because the experience of the pure white light is Transcendental, isn't it? It is the Dharmakaya; whereas the arupaloka, according to standard Buddhist tradition, is definitely mundane. So the most one could say would be that the experience of the pure white light corresponded to Dharmakaya or Nirvana or whatever; the experience of the visions corresponded to the arupa- and rupalokas, especially perhaps the rupalokas, for obvious reasons, and of course the experience of rebirth corresponded to the kamaloka.

Kulamitra: I suppose I had been thinking a bit like what you were saying just before, that if you experience something Transcendental you must be if not Enlightened at least a Stream Entrant; and that perhaps the clear white light as such wasn't Transcendental, but more akin to the Buddha

forms.

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S: But the text, as far as I recollect, does say the clear wt of the Void, of the Dharmakaya; so I am trying as it were to make sense of that by saying that you see it as it were from a distance; otherwise one has got to straightforwardly disagree with the text, and obviously one hesitates to do that. So it is as though one sees it from a distance.

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Kulamitra: But the visionary forms would correspond more or less to visualisation practice?

S: That's right, yes.

Kulamitra: The form itself was not the Transcendental, but that through the form you could experience the Transcendental?

S: Right, yes.

Abhaya: The next question is Suvajra's on the dream yoga.

Suvaira: You mention dream yoga in this lecture. Have you ever had teach

inQs of the dream voua or Dractised it nersonally?

S: I have never had actual teachings, but I have practised it without teachings, which is probably quite wrong! And I found it was possible to maintain one's state of awareness and self-consciousness in the dream state, so I satisfied myself that that was possible. I didn't pursue the matter. But sometimes I do have quite spontaneously - in a way, and in the dream state <know> that I am dreamir19. And i also have found that one can direct and shape one's dreams, and one can experience in the dream state what one wants to experience., Perhaps it is not advisable to cultivate that technique until one can trust one's own desires. But, yes, certainly there is such a thing as the yoga of the dream state. I suggest that one works on one's mindfulness and awareness during the waking state before thinking too much about working on it during the dream state. The one in fact is a natural extension of the other. I think if you are verymindful and aware, in the true sense, during your waking state, something will percolate through into the dream state.

Abhaya: Virananda has a question on personal stupas, and our own epitaphs.

S: Hm. A good question for a poet!

Virananda: The idea came up in our group that, as an aid to the recollec- tion of death, one could design one's own reliquary stupa or urn, have it built, keep it on one's shrine and perhaps even write one's own epitaph for it.

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S: Well, one might need to revise one's epitaph from time to time!

Virananda: That point was made also.

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Some people thought that this would be catering to our self-indulgence, others that it would be a useful way of keeping death in mind. If one wanted to have one's reliquary designed

and built do you think one should go ahead and do it?

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S: I would say consult your spiritual friends. This is the sort of question you can raise with your chapter. 'Do you think I am being self-indulgent or would it be a useful reminder to me of the fact that I will die one day?' I think definitely consult your spiritual friends, who probably know you better than you know yourself. I must say I don't quite like the idea of a little measly stupa on a shelf. I would like to build a nice big one out in the garden! Of course, I realise not everybody has got a garden.

Virananda: Have you any view of the tradition among educated Westerners, for instance, of writing their own epitaphs? Is this contrary to our Buddhist doctrine of anasna?

S: This sounds a bit precious to me! I mean Zen masters do recite or write verses at the moment of death, some of them are a bit like epitaphs; but what is an epitaph?

Virananda: It's something by which you want to be remembered by those still alive.

S: Yes, I knew the sort of formal definition, but I was asking what was the significance of it? What function does it really perform? It originates with the Greeks, as most things do. Some Greek epitaphs are very touching. Some famous poets, as you well know, <have composed> them. Some modern poets have; Pope composed epitaphs, so did Johnson. I think it was quite popular in the eighteenth century due to a sort of classical spirit, and also the fact that monuments were often put up and inscriptions or epitaphs were wanted. Sometimes you see them in country churchyards, quite quaint ones.

I must say I have no particular feeling to compose my own epitaph. I might feel differently a little later on! I have written a few epitaphs, but they were quite imaginary ones, just as a poetic form. They weren't included in Abhaya's recent volume of selections, so I assume he didn't think much of them! But I think it is quite a nice art form, if you see  
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what I mean; not that you have any particular person in mind, but you just compose an epitaph. Or maybe that seems a little precious, who knows?

Dharmapriya: Perhaps you should compose an epitaph to your atma?

S: Well, perhaps you should compose the sort of epitaph that you would like other people to compose on you when you are dead.

Abhaya: In that case, what would you like yours to be, Bhante?

S: I don't really know. 'He did his duty'!

S: No! I wouldn't agree with that at all. I mean duty is a profoundly significant word. Or, for an Order member: 'He died with his kesa clean!' You could have another epitaph for an Order member, on his tomb: 'The last solitary retreat'!

... I forget the first two Enes, but the second went:

Abhaya: Are you ready for the last question?

Abhaya: It's from Tejananda.

it perhaps not exactly.

S: I am not sure I should answer this right off the cuff, if you see what I mean. Maybe I can just make a few scattered observations. Things which should be included: I suppose you should have as many Order members as possible gathered together, as well, of course, as the friends and relations of the deceased Order member; appropriate readings; the Vajrasattva

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mantra, of course; the nrtta bhavana; a discourse - though perhaps it might be good to have the discourse at the memorial meeting. Perhaps I should make it clear that there ought to be the after-death ceremony itself in connection with the disposal of the body, and then perhaps after a month or after 49 days a memorial meeting, you know, when the departed Order member would be eulogised, his merits rejoiced in, his life recalled; there could be one speaker, there could be a number of speakers contributing. Perhaps a feast - well, not exactly a feast, a memorial meal. By that time people would have got over their immediate grief and could recall 'dear old So-and-so' in a thoroughly positive manner. Things you should not do: I can't really think of anything. I think that, you know, really foolish things no one would think

of doing on an occasion like that.

One thing Order members should do - I hope you all know about this is make your will and appoint Buddhist executors. You know about the legal position, don't you? Well, perhaps I should mention this. I mean every Order member ought to know this. I think it's mentioned in the briefing that we give the new Order members. That in Britain - I don't know what it's like in other countries - the person or persons who have the last say when it comes to the arrangements for your funeral are your executors, so if you want to be sure to be buried or cremated with Buddhist rites, you must appoint a Buddhist executor, or an executor who will carry out those wishes of yours. And you name your executor or executors in your will. If you die intestate, that is to say if you have not made a will, your next of kin are automatically the executors and as such have the last word. So that if, as a Buddhist, you make no will and you die, then your non-Buddhist relations are automatically your executors and can decide whether you have a Buddhist funeral or a Christian one. Your Buddhist friends and fellow Order members have absolutely no say then. But if they do have a say they do so not by virtue of the fact that they are Order members but by virtue of the fact that you have named them in your will as your executors, so you just have to do that if you want to make sure. Subhuti and the Order Office generally has all this information.

Suvajra: Would you just make it clear that an executor should - you should actually trust your executor personally, because the executor has got the right to do what he wants.

S: Oh, yes, indeed. Suvajra: You know, disregarding your own instructions in your will.  
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S: Oh, yes, indeed, he can disregard even instructions left in your will. He is not obliged to follow those.

Suvajra: So if the family starts pressurising the executor to have the Christian burial, and he gives in, he is within his rights to do that, so you must have the executor you trust in.

S: Right, yes, indeed. Presumably you can trust an Order member, one hopes.

Tejananda: The other part of the question:

Presumably, the use of the Bardo Thodol would be relevant to

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the deceased persons who, through their own practice in life, are likely to understand and benefit from it. I know you have

spoken about this. But I wonder if sort of a simplified version might be of benefit to Buddhists in general, non-FWBO people, even possibly non-Buddhists. For example, one which would emphasise, not that 'On such-and-such day such-and-such a Buddha will appear', but simply 'Remember whatever visions you perceive,

these are your own thought forms: do not be afraid.'

S: Yes, I think there is much to be said for a simplified version of the Tibetan Book of the Dead. And don't forget there are many versions, anyway. I mean the book which Suvajra mentioned does make that very clear; there is a whole literature. We are familiar with that particular 'Book of the Dead', but there are quite a number of them.

Voice: Oh!

Tejananda: So it would be quite possible, say, for somebody to actually compose one based on one of those versions?

S: Yes. Preferably it should be composed by someone with a certain sensitivity in these matters.

Abhaya: Well, that's it.

S: Did you have quite a good discussion about this among yourselves? (Voices assenting.) Because it is obviously something of practical importance. We shall increasingly be called upon to perform one another's funeral ceremonies or after-death ceremonies. We don't know who's going to go first. I mean it's a young Order, on the whole, so we haven't been called upon to celebrate the obsequies of many Order members so far; only two people, as far as I remember, have died as Order members: Vangisa

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and Padmasiddhi. (Voice prompting.) Oh, Mahadharmavira, sorry; yes, three. Yes, his case was rather special, wasn't it? So the time is going to come when, every year, Order members are going to die, especially if we have a somewhat bigger Order than we have at present. There will be perhaps a sort of dwindling band of senior Order members who will be tottering along to the crematorium or being wheeled in by younger Order members!

'Oh, yes, old So-and-so's still here, still followed by ( )! Do you

remember Such-and-such?' 'Do you remember those study seminars?' 'Do you remember Il Convento?' 'Ha ha, Il Convento! Yes, I haven't thought about Il Convento for years!'

OK, then, what do we have tomorrow?

(Chat about tomorrow and Sunday.)

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DAY SIX

Abhaya: This evening, Bhante, we've got 11 questions for you on this lecture 'The Mandala: Tantric symbol of Integration'. The first question is from Dharmapriya on the origin of the Tantras.



Dharmapriya: In this lecture and elsewhere you discuss what a Tantra is and the spiritual origins of Tantric Buddhism and, as far

as I can recollect, elsewhere you demolish the theory that Tantric practice in India was one and the same regardless of whether it was Buddhist or Hindu. But there is another theory, which I have not heard you discuss, covering the question of

the historic origins of Tantric rites and symbols themselves. This theory posits their origin in the pre-Aryan Indus Valley civilisation on the basis of archeological evidence. These rites and symbols are supposed to have survived underground, so to say, for several millennia and emerged around 500 CE.

Do you think that this is very likely, or know more about  
I have not heard you discuss, covering the question of

wine into old bottles, i.e. Buddhist meaning and significance into old symbols and rites?

S: There are two quite different things there. First of all, the idea that the Tantric tradition or Tantric teaching or Tantric practice in some way represents a sort of survival of prehistoric beliefs and practices I think has not been proven at all. I think the links are very tenuous. For instance, something that is sometimes mentioned is the allegedly meditating figure found on a Harappan seal. So the point that is made is that this figure is meditating and it is a bit Siva-like, and Siva is connected with the Tantras in Hinduism, and this shows that the Tantric tradition goes back to at least the Harappan civilisation. This is really quite absurd, but this is how some people reason. I am not saying there is no truth in it at all, but I regard it as definitely not proven.

On the other hand, we do know that Tantric ritual and Tantric symbolism do incorporate quite primitive elements, perhaps even deliberately. How far back those elements go we have no means of telling except that they

must be very ancient, and the Tantric tradition, the Vajrayana especially, incorporates them for reasons which are very clear. I would regard the Vajrayana as definitely and essentially a Buddhist tradition, a spiritual

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tradition, but one of the most distinctive features of that tradition is the extent to which it tries to put us into touch with our quite basic feelings and attitudes and to integrate them with our conscious attitudes, to integrate them with our spiritual life, not to leave them outside. So what are psychologically our quite basic emotional attitudes, historically speaking, one might say, are represented by certain primitive beliefs and practices, and the Vajrayana, in trying to integrate the one, incorporates the other; or as a means of or basis for integrating the one, incorporates the other. For instance, take the four magical rites which were transformed into the principal functions of Buddhahood. What are these four principal rites? Pacifying; subjugating; destroying; and prospering. So clearly, these are forms of quite primitive magic, they are quite primitive magical rites; they probably go back to the dawn of civilisation or even beyond. But they have been incorporated into the Vajrayana in the highly sublimated form of the four principal functions of Buddhahood. So that all the emotions associated with those four rites, very basic and primitive emotions, can be integrated into one's conscious

attitude and one's spiritual life. You see the point, I think. (Voices assenting.)

So because the Vajrayana incorporates those primitive elements, that does not mean you can trace the Vajrayana back to prehistoric times. It is very faulty logic here. But Evans-Wentz, in some of his otherwise excellent writings, seems to take it for granted that the Tantric teachings and traditions, as Tantric teachings and traditions, go back to prehistoric times, and that is entirely not proven.

For instance, supposing we as Western Buddhists were eventually to incorporate in a ritual or a practice some reference, say, to Merlin or to King Arthur. Would that prove that Western Buddhism must go back to Merlin and King Arthur? That is the sort of argument. It is really quite childish.

Suvajra: You said at the beginning that there were two points.

S: Yes, I've dealt with both of them actually.

Suvajra: What was the second one?

S: Well, they were sort of mixed up together, weren't they? Maybe Dharmapriya would like to say what they were.

Dharmapriya: It was the question of the historical origins of the Tantra

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and the question of Vajrayana Buddhism taking over Tantric rituals.

5: These are really - they have become confused in the minds of people like Evans-Wentz but they are really, as I said, two quite separate questions. But as they were mixed up in the question I mixed them up a bit in the answer.

Abhaya: Right, the second question is from Kuladeva, also on the Tantras.

5: Before Kuladeva asks his question, I didn't really distinguish, in answering Dharmapriya's question, between the Hindu and the Buddhist Tantras. For the purpose of answering that question, that wasn't really necessary.

Kuladeva: The question is in two parts. Do you think there is any benefit

to be gained by Order members reading the Tantras? That is

the first part.

5: Benefit? Well, I suppose it can't be entirely devoid of benefit. No doubt the question is the degree of benefit, and perhaps the degree of benefit relative to the degree of benefit to be obtained from using one's time in other ways. A few Tantras have been translated; whether we can really gather very much from them just reading the words, apart from any actual

explanations, is quite another matter. I am not saying we can't gain something at least from just reading them; there may be some benefit; but that benefit may not be the particular benefit that the Tantra itself, as part of a living tradition, is really meant to convey. You may derive a benefit of a general Buddhist nature; or, at least, if you're reading a Tantra you are not watching TV or indulging in some other possibly unskilful activity, so there is that to be looked at, too; you're not reading the newspaper, not passing your time in idle gossip. But I suppose what one really needs to do is to weigh the benefits to be derived from reading a Tantra which perhaps one is not in a position to understand properly or to practise, against the benefit, say, of reading a sutra which would be more meaningful to you, or the benefit of meditating, or the benefit of communicating with a spiritual friend. Unless one is really almost specialising in the study of Buddhist literature, there is probably not much to be derived just from a perusal of a mere translation of a Tantric text, as distinct from the study of it in the traditional manner. On the other hand, if someone wanted to do that, had a strong feeling to do it, I would not discourage them. In the case of some people there might be certain associations that the Tantras have for them emotionally, and as a result of reading the Tantras the particular emotions which are associated with

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the Tantras, may be reinforced, and that may be a quite skilful thing to do. So I think it is basically a question of deciding on what is the best way of spending one's time and what is the most useful reading matter for oneself personally at one's present stage of spiritual development.

Kuladeva: The second question is; is there any connection between the

Tantras and sadhanas, and if so what are the connections?

S: There are apparently Tantras and - what do they call them? There are sort of major Tantras and minor Tantras; the minor Tantras are Tantras which are affiliated to major Tantras, and then other works may be affiliated to them, and then sadhanas will be affiliated to them. Sadhanas usually describe the procedure for the visualising of a particular Buddha or Bodhisattva or Dakini and reciting their mantra, and those Buddhas or Bodhisattvas will of course belong to a particular Tantra or Tantric cycle or to a number of such. So the sadhana is concerned mainly with practice. A sadhana represents a sort of segment of a Tantra or series of Tantras or cycle of Tantras. You could even say - though this may not be very traditional - that it represents a sort of condensation or concentration of a particular aspect, let us say, of Tantric literature and Tantric practice. There will, of course, be some sadhanas which are not based on or connected with a particular Tantra because a particular teacher or guru may have seen, so to speak, a particular Bodhisattva form in his meditation and have composed a sadhana based thereon. The most famous collection of sadhanas is the Sadhana Mala, or Garland of Sadhanas, which is published in the g (?) series. That contains - I forget how many; I think it's a couple of hundred - sadhanas for different deities. Conze translates one or two of these, doesn't he? I think there is at least one translated in Buddhist Texts through the Ages. Bhattacharya translates, sometimes in abbreviated form, quite a number of them in his Buddhist Iconography. Artists often

consult them for information about how a particular Buddha or Bodhisattva

figure is to be represented in art, because the representation must follow the details as given in the sadhanas.

Dharmadhara: When you said 'a cycle of Tantras' I didn't really understand what you meant.

S: A cycle of Tantras means simply a series of Tantras based upon or grouped around the same central figure or figures.

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Dharmapriya: As far as I can remember, some people at Aryamaitreya Mandala were telling me that the form of the sadhanas in the Sadhana J~(ala was often quite simpler than the way the sadhanas are handed down by most Tibetan lamas. For that reason, they apparently prefer using these simpler forms

S: They are simpler, this is quite true. They mostly are not longer than a page or even less. They are quite highly condensed. They are mainly descriptions of the deity, and they are of course of Indian origin; and, as one might have expected, as the centuries have gone by, the Tibetans have tended to elaborate upon these simple forms. So it may well be that in our case, too, there is something to be said for going back to the original, basic, simple forms. As a matter of fact, the 'zaXnapazcnLta Sadnana does come from the Sadhana Mala, except that I have shortened and simplified it. That is a little bit longer than some of the others.

I have sometimes felt that many of the Tibetan sadhanas are far, far too detailed for anyone to practise except full-time meditators. Also, I think there is another aspect to it. Yes, you do need certain guidelines; you do need certain information about the deity, the Buddha or Bodhisattva, whose figure you are visualising. But at the same time you are trying, so to speak, to have a spiritual experience, and your own spiritual creativity mustn't be stifled. For instance, to put it strongly, you mustn't be so concerned about carrying out every detail of the visualisation as described in the text that you don't see Avalokitesvara! I think this is a quite important point. I think sometimes a time may come when you need almost this is after some years of practice, of course - to drop the formal visualisation and try to experience that particular Buddha or Bodhisattva quite apart from, quite distinct from, that particular framework. It is a bit like - to give an analogy - what I was talking about with regard to the experience of the presence of deceased people: you can have just as strong a personal impression of them, even though the physical body isn't any longer there. In the same way, you can have just as strong an impression, say, or visualisation, of Avalokitesvara or Tara, even though the figure as described in the sadhana is no longer there. I am not here referring to what is sometimes described as a 'feeling of the presence' even though you can't actually visualise; I am speaking of something beyond that.

But I sometimes think it's not a bad idea for us, in addition to the normal visualisation practice, to approach it the other way round. For instance, to say to oneself, 'Look, I am doing the Avalokitesvara sadhana; so what does that mean? Who is Avalokitesvara?

Avalokitesvara represents

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the embodiment of Compassion. All right. Let me meditate and get a strong feeling for

Compassion, let me develop Compassion, do that particular bzhahmn

whaza, so that I am really in touch with that particular emotion; and then let me say to myself, well, supposing there was somebody who was absolutely the embodiment of Compassion and nothing but Compassion, what would he look like?' Just ask yourself that and try to visualise that without any reference to traditional iconography at all; and try to visualise such a figure, and even do that in detail - how would such a figure look? How old would he be? How would he be dressed? What would be his expression? etc. etc. Try to develop it in that way. Because, even though the visualisation practice is useful as a support, it is only a support, and in the end, in the long run, you must come into contact with, so to speak - or even literally, one might say - Avalokitesvara or Tara or whoever the Bodhisattva is, himself or herself. It can't be just a visualisation exercise; that is probably an unfortunate expression.

Suvajra: Would you .... say the same, Bhante, for the 'sound which is heard' which is the symbol of the Bodhisattvas' Compassion? Would you imagine, say, 'What would the sound of Compassion be like?'

S: I think that would be very much more difficult. In principle, yes, one could, but it would be very much more difficult. But, yes, one could try, if one did succeed in evoking the image of the Buddha or Bodhisattva in the way that I suggested.

Abhaya: We move on to the third question from Suvajra, about the composition of the Tantras.

Suvajra: No, it's not actually composition of the Tantras. The question is: You mentioned in your lecture that the Tantras seem to be very chaotic when you look at them; you can't seem to detect any order within any particular Tantra. I was wondering if there is an order in the Tantra, but not necessarily a rational order, much as the ...

S: Yes, this is true. I have heard it said by some teachers that the Tantras as texts have been deliberately scrambled so as to make them inaccessible to unqualified, uninitiated people: that is to say, mixed up, with chapters in the wrong place and all that sort of thing. There may be something in it. But some of the sutras read like that, too, don't they? - perhaps for different reasons. But the Tantras aren't really literature, except in

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part. They are no more literature, really, than the dbhtdhav7a Sitaka is literature or the - what do you call those sort of handbooks you get for particular makes of motor car? - manuals. They are a bit more like that. We don't read a manual; it is a sort of practical guide. The Tantras should be thought of, perhaps, more in those sort of terms.

Suvajra: But in a car manual you wouldn't expect to find the - I don't know what you find in car manuals! - say, the exhaust system put in with the electrical system. I wonder would you find stuff - you know, having some things mixed up?

S: Oh, yes, quite likely. Because you are dealing with something much more dangerous potentially than a motor car! Also you might find that sometimes the different parts were wrongly numbered or wrongly labelled. The oral tradition is handed down; the gurus in this

sort of case tell you: 'No, that isn't No. 19, that's No. 43.' You say, 'Ah! That means - ' and you see what it really means.

We shouldn't take all this too literally, but one can appreciate the spirit of it, that the Tantras aren't really meant for messing about with, and steps have been taken, in different ways, to safeguard those teachings in some cases, without being obscurantist - from profane inquiry. I think this relates much more to the Anuttara Yoga Tantras, not so much to the others.

Abhaya: Next question from Ratnaguna on the Five Jinas and the Transcendental.

Ratnaguna: The Mandala of the Five Buddhas is a sort of representation of Enlightenment in spatial terms. I wonder, can it also be seen in terms of time, in a dynamic way? For instance, Aksobhya is the sun in the morning and Ratnasambhava at midday, Amitabha

in the evening and Amoghasiddhi at midnight;

S: Well, that relates to the position of the sun in the sky, so you are back at space.

Ratnaguna: It also is in time, isn't it?

S: It depends how you measure time!

Ratnaguna: Let me ask it again. As one approaches the mandala, you go in in the east, don't you? So I wondered if, as well as seeing the mandala in terms of space, if we could see it in terms of the Enlightenment process, beginning with Aksobhya, going round to Ratnasambhava

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S: Oh yes, you can certainly do this, but you arrive at time, so to speak, via space, if you see what I mean. Also, is there a progression?

Ratnaguna: I think I could see a progression, but Ratnasambhava is difficult to put into that progression.

S: Because they are all Buddhas.

ratnaguna: Ah, but I was also thinking that Enlightenment isn't a static spot. I was thinking maybe the Five Buddhas could represent the Spiral of Enlightenment, if you like, going on from

S: When you represent the Five Jinas spatially, you are in effect splitting Enlightenment up into its principal aspects, and representing that spatially in the form of five Buddhas, one in the centre and the other four at the four cardinal points; so if you thought of Buddhahood in terms of time, wouldn't you have to split up time, and in that case how would you split up time? Can you split up time in the same way that you split up space? If you can't split up time, what operation would there be with regard to time analogous to the splitting up of space?

Ratnaguna: I don't understand the question, Bhante. (Laughter.)

S: I suppose you could do it with regard to the day noon, evening, or morning, afternoon, evening, night.

- morning, noon, after

Ratnaguna: You see, I was thinking of - in that Enlightenment is a process, it must have stages.

S: Well, yes and no! What does one mean by saying Enlightenment is a process? Is Enlightenment itself a process or is it the realisation of Enlightenment that is a process? Because, in the case of the Five Jinas, in the case of this spatial division, you've got, well, as it were, five Buddhas, five equal Buddhas. Even if you say that it is only the central Buddha that represents full Enlightenment, the other four Buddhas are as it were on a level with one another. They are not usually regarded as representing successive stages, but of simultaneously existing aspects. So if you were to think of Buddhahood as distinct from a process of attainment of Buddhahood in terms of time, how would you make an analogous subdivision of time? Or would you make a subdivision at all, or would you go about it in some other way?

Ratnaguna: Again I don't understand the question; but let me come at it from another angle. Why do we enter the Mandala from the East?

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S: Well, because it's represented in spatial terms and you have to enter it from somewhere. And you enter it from the East because the sun rises in the East. This is the usual explanation. So it is where everything starts, it is the natural place. It's where light arises.

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Ratnaguna: But, you see, that - why is Aksobhya in the East, then? Could you not have Amitabha or Vairocana?

S: Well, what do you mean by the question 'Why have Aksobhya in the East?'? Because Aksobhya is simply the name given to the Buddha of the East. It is a bit like saying 'Why isn't the left hand the right hand?'

Ratnaguna: Is it like that?

S: I think so, because there is a hand on this side and you call it the left hand; well, why do you call it the left hand? Well, simply to indicate that it is on this side and not on that side.

Kulamitra: Would it make any difference, though, if, say, Aksobhya was the Buddha symbolic of love and light?

S: Well, what do you mean by Aksobhya?

Kulamitra: Well, if the Buddha in the eastern quarter had the qualities usually associated with

Amitabha, would that make any difference?

S: Well, traditionally, Aksobhya is associated with certain qualities, but whether he was associated with those qualities before he became regarded as the Buddha of the East or vice versa, perhaps we don't know. Aksobhya is referred to, as Conze points out, in the ~etfection of W~sdzn Ln 8,000 £~nes - though it is probably a later interpolation; so he is associated with the East. Why he in particular was associated with the East, it is difficult to say, except that - well, in a way there is a quite simple reason and that is that, well, Aksobhya, you know, does live in the East. You see what I mean? That is what the sutras say, that in the eastern direction there is a Buddha Land, Abhirati, and its Buddha is Aksobhya; and you know all sorts of associations have clustered around him.

I suppose you can't really ask about the why and wherefore of a symboli

cal system. We don't really know how it started, usually. You can always discover a reason, but whether it is the reason, that's another matter. Well, sometimes Aksobhya is found in the centre of the Mandala. There is a certain flexibility. But anyway, that doesn't really sort out the question of whether we can, so to speak, subdivide time in the same way that we subdivide space.

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Ratnaguna: Subdivide time?

S: Can you have aspects of time or dimensions of time, in the same way that you can have dimensions of space? And can you have dimensions of time representing different aspects of Buddhahood in the same way that you can have different spatial directions representing different aspects of Buddhahood?

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Kulamitra: You can have past, present and future.

S: Well, in what way do past, present and future represent different aspects of Buddhahood? Is there a past aspect? Is there a future one? And, after all, that is only three dimensions. In the case of space, there are four.

Kulamitra: Are there not the Buddhas of the past, present and future?

S: Yes, but they do not represent aspects of Buddhahood. They are past, present and future Enlightened Ones who are, purportedly, historical characters.

Abhaya: I think Tejananda wants to <ask a question>.

Tejananda: What if you see it in terms of the Spiral as a temporal process, in other words, the development?

S: I thought a spiral was a spatial figure.

Tejananda: Welil, you must go up the Spiral in terms of time as well.



S: That's true, but that is a spatio-temporal symbol, it is not a purely temporal one.

What it all seems to suggest is, you can't really separate time from space. This is what the physicists have suspected all along.

Dharmapriya: Perhaps, if I understood what Ratnaguna was saying, he is going on trying to get at the dynamic aspect of Buddhahood. You have stressed often that Enlightenment is not a thing but it keeps on going, as were the beginning, and I suppose that is the question: whether the Mandala can in any way express that aspect of Buddhahood.

S: You see, a spiral is cumulative, so that means the succeeding stage is so to speak more than, higher than, the preceding stage. So here you have got away from the questions of aspects; because the four aspects, the four Buddhas who are found in the four cardinal directions, are so speak on the same level. But in the case of successive stages of the Spiral, the successive, the later, the succeeding stages would by definition be

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greater, more advanced, higher, than the preceding ones; so 'aspects' suggests a certain equipollency, one might say. I mean, it is true that there is so to speak a temporal aspect of Enlightenment, but it doesn't seem that one can speak of it having dimensions in the same way that space has dimensions. Maybe it is something to be reflected upon.

Of course, you could perhaps get round it to some extent by maintaining that time, in the sense of the distinction of past, present and future, was illusory. You would then, of course, have to abandon your spiral symbol and you could say that Enlightenment was equally manifested in past, present and future, just as it is equally manifested in the Buddhas of North, South, East and West. Whether that would be of any practical value, I don't know. In other words, you would have to give up the idea of cumulativeness, the idea of progress; whether that would be wise, I'm not sure. But space and time are very mysterious things, and the relationship between them is really quite mysterious. Perhaps that is all that this discussion really highlights. It is to be reflected upon. There must be a reason why it is so puzzling, or why you can't quite square space with time or time with space.

Dharmapriya: Coming back to the question of entering the Mandala: is there any spiritual reason why one enters from the East?

S: Well, what does one mean by spiritual reason? What does one mean by entering from the East? (Laughter.) Entering from the East simply means that when you begin, you begin at the beginning.

Ratnaguna: Beginning of what, Bhante?

S: In this case, the spiritual process. A mandala is a symbolical representation of the universe, etc. etc.; that is another of its aspects; the East is the quarter where the sun rises; so, since in the Vajrayana everything is correlated with everything else, you correlate your own setting out on the spiritual quest with the rising of the sun. So it is not a question of why you start in the East; your starting is analogous to the East and to the rising of the sun in the East. It is

really another way of looking at the same thing.

Kulamitra: From what you have said so far, it would seem in a way that, regardless of where you enter, once you are inside the Mandala, you are inside the whole Mandala; you as it were occupy it - I mean that isn't really the right word. But it is not just that you have contacted Aksobhya

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first, but once you enter the Mandala you contact all those aspects of Buddhahood. Would that be right?

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S: You could also say that, wherever you start, that is the East. You can't really separate the East from your starting point, because the East is symbolically your starting point.

Swedenborg goes into this when he talks about heaven and the angels. He says that in heaven there isn't space in the same way that there is on earth, but in heaven, whichever direction the angels turn in is the East, because that is where the spiritual sun rises. So their East is wherever their faces are. Their East is that particular direction in which their faces are turned. So it is rather like that. It is not a question of 'Why do we begin in the East?' The East is where we begin. In symbolical terms, where we begin is the East.

Ratnaguna: Bhante, I'm a bit puzzled about - I suppose this trespasses on someone else's question, but ...

S: That there is another spatial term, huh?

Ratnaguna: I suppose what I'm asking is: what would we do with the Mandala, then, if we enter in the East? What does it mean, to enter the Mandala? Because the Mandala is there; why don't you just look at it? Why do you have to enter it at all? That suggests a process.

S: It is because it's not just to be contemplated, but it represents something actually to be done.

Ratnaguna: So what would we do? Wouldn't we enter the East to Aksobhya, and try to develop objectivity, and then go round to Ratnasambhava and

try to develop the Mind of Equality?

S: One could look at it like that, no doubt. But I don't think I have spoken of it in those sort of terms. I think I touched on it yesterday in Buddhism and William Blake. What you are essentially doing is, when you reach that point, is to develop Wisdom or Awareness in all its aspects, as represented by the jnanas associated with the Jinas or of which the Jinas are the embodiments, so to speak. When you split things up in that way or speak in terms of different aspects, you are just trying to bring out the full content of, in this case, Buddhahood or Enlightenment. You can more easily comprehend that content if you split it up into its constituent aspects, as we call them.

Anyway, let's leave the Mandala, by whichever gate.

Abhaya: Virananda now has a question about the Five Jinas and the Holy Places.

vi rsnndse HavR anv of the Tibetan schools of Buddhism made a correlation

between the Indian Holy Sites of Pilgrimage, such as Sarnath and Bodhgaya, and the Five Jinas?

S: I don't think they have, but there is a connection via their nudtas, because Vairocana, for instance, is the archetypal form of the Teaching Buddha, and the Buddha taught first in the Deer Park at Sarnath. So it is as though the Sarnath Buddha, the Teaching Buddha, the Buddha showing the nudza of Turning the Wheel of Dharma, in his universalised form, so to speak, is Vairocana; so Vairocana is associated with Sarnath, one could say. Similarly, the bhwnispazsa - whose is the bhwnispazsa?

Voices: Aksobhya.

S: Aksobhya, so that's associated with Buddhagaya. And we don't have holy places, I think, for Ratnasambhava and Amoghasiddhi; or even, in a sense, for Amitabha, though you could, of course, also associate Amitabha with with Buddhagaya, but then you have two Jinas for one Holy Place. So you can only make this correlation, it would seem, to a limited degree. But it is an interesting thought.

Abhaya: Dharmapriya now has a question on Vairocana's consort.

Dharmapriya: I'm afraid it's just a factual question. In the lecture, as far as we could hear, you spoke of Vairocana's consort as Vajradatesvari. Was this merely a slip of the tongue, or was that the alternate to Akasadatesvari?

S: I'm not sure, I can't remember. It usually is Akasadatesvari. It could be that she is sometimes called Vajradatesvari. I wouldn't be sure of that. But the usual name is certainly Akasadatesvari; again, probably, for obvious reasons - you know, the Lady of Space. I can't throw any light on that, except that she is usually called Akasadatesvari.

Abhaya: Another question from Dharmapriya, on the female Buddha.

Dharmapriya: Bhante YOU correlate the male Buddhas with Compassion and

the female with Wisdom. But recently I have come across at least two Tibetan explanations which reverse this correlation. Is this merely another case of various correlation possibilities, Q & A ABP VI/1/14

or is there more to it than that?

S: I think it is simply that there are various correlatishn possibilities. 22aina is almost always female, as in the case of Prajnaparamita as a deity. The term is grammatically feminine. And Compassion is always equated with upayakaushalya, which is so to speak active and is usually regarded as masculine. But that is not to say, in some contexts, that the symbolism, so to speak, is not reversed. I think it is more usual to speak of Wisdom as feminine and Compassion or upayakaushalya as masculine. Ultimately, of course, they are both and neither.

Abhaya: The next question is Mahamati's on Amoghasiddhi.

Mahamati: In the lecture Bhante. You describe the practical activity

of Amoghasiddhi as 'very mysterious and occult'. I wondered why, out of all the five Buddhas, the activity of Amoghasiddhi is particularly singled out in this way, and I wondered whether

there were any practical conclusions to be drawn from this.

S: Well, Amoghasiddhi does represent a sort of union of opposites in a rather special way. I think it's Govinda who speaks of Amoghasiddhi as 'the midnight sun'. Amoghasiddhi is green, so green is a product of which two primary colours? (Voices: Blue and yellow.) Blue and yellow. So blue is the colour of the sky, yellow is the colour of the earth. So you could say blue is masculine, yellow is feminine; blue is the night, yellow is the day. Sunlight is yellow. So Amoghasiddhi therefore represents, more than the other Buddhas, a sort of union or blending of opposites. So inasmuch as he represents a union or blending of opposites, his functioning won't be, so to speak, quite so straightforward, if you see what I mean, as that of the other Buddhas; and in that sense it's more mysterious, one might say. Do you see what I'm getting at? It is almost as though you don't quite know how Amoghasiddhi is going to behave or function. And he is associated with functioning, but it's a mysterious functioning because he blends these different aspects. So it's like someone who is a very complex character; you can't be quite sure how he's going to behave. His functioning may be more subtle than that of a more limited, straightforward type of personality.

Mahamati: I think it was that, it was associated with practical activity, and I somehow expected that to be more accessible, in a way, because it's actually acting in the world.

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S: Ah, but perhaps we should bear this in mind, though, that the activity or functioning of a Buddha is likely to be quite incomprehensible to those who are not Buddhas. We find that even when we compare ourselves with people who are much more experienced than ourselves and possibly wiser than ourselves. They go about things in a somewhat different way, not quite in the way that we would have thought of, though sometimes we can recognise the rightness of the way that they go about things after it has been made clear to us. Or perhaps we could not have expected them to behave quite in that way; we could not have anticipated it, just because we are not as experienced or not as wise as they are.

Mahamati: Maybe it's a question of again asking why, but it just is the case, it is the symbolism. But I still wonder why this particular quality is the 'particularly mysterious and occult' one.

S: Well, you know, the functioning is practice, it's practical; so you might say that, so long as a Buddha doesn't actually do anything, you might

think that you understood him, but when you actually see him in operation you realise that you hadn't understood! You have your own idea about a Buddha, how a Buddha should function or how an Enlightened person should function, but very often they will function in a way that is quite different from that, which might even be quite baffling to you. So perhaps one can look at it in that way: that the functioning of a Buddha - and Amoghasiddhi does represent especially functioning - must be mysterious to someone who isn't Enlightened. It's all right just to look at the Buddha and admire him, and think 'Oh yes, he's Enlightened,' but when he starts actually functioning you might find it very difficult to understand how a Buddha should function in that way. Perhaps you might not be able to see him functioning at all; he might appear to you to be doing nothing. It might be a bit like the Taoist saying: 'He accomplishes things by not doing anything.' You're sort of looking out for what he's doing, but his mode of operation is more subtle than that. That's why it is infallible or 'unobstructed'. You can only obstruct that activity which is sufficiently tangible to be obstructed.

Susiddhi: Bhante, is there any direct connection between Amoghasiddhi and snow, icicles, cold? Or is that just something people put on it because it's the Buddha of the North? I've never seen any connection

S: Well, Amoghasiddhi is green, which suggests, you know, vegetation. He's not white. No, for me, certainly, he doesn't have any association

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with snow and icicles. I know he has been sort of made the Buddha of the North. Some people take that quite literally, but he isn't the Buddha of the North Pole, so to speak! There is a lot of symbolism connected with the North on account of the Northern Star, just as there is a lot of symbolism connected with the East. In Sufism, it seems there is a lot of symbolism connected with the North. The Northern Star, if I haven't got it wrong - of course, this may be out of date - doesn't move. It is the star that in ancient times mariners steered by, so it suggests a point of orientation (though orientation means, of course, getting one's bearings from the East), but the Northern Star represents a higher point of reference, so clearly it has sort of spiritual and mystical overtones. How are we getting on?

Abhaya: Very well. Three more questions. The next one is from Dharmapriya on the Mandala as an integrating force.

Dharmapriya: You describe how the Mandala is a symbol of integration

but your description is really on the highest level - at least in the eyes of our study group. How could we on our level use the Mandala as an integrating factor in a practical way? Would that be a question of taking up a Mandala visualisation practice, the offering of the Mandala, or in what other way?

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S: I think we have touched on this when I have spoken of 'your' mandala, when the question has been raised: 'Taking your life as the mandala, what is at the centre of your personal

mandala?' I think we can use the symbol of the mandala in this sort of way. Some people have even drawn their personal mandalas and tried to be as honest as possible. Some have even drawn pairs of mandalas, one representing what they think is their present mandala, and the other what they would like their mandala to be. I think we can use the mandala symbol in this sort of way, practically. One could have, say, a session drawing perhaps these two kinds of mandala and then discussing them afterwards. One could even build up these mandalas, in the same way that an ordinary mandala is built up, actually putting objects representing the main interests and activities of your life in different parts of the mandala. Supposing you did honestly feel that the Three Jewels occupied the centre of your mandala, you could put a symbol of the Three Jewels there, or you could put your kesa there. Then you could ask yourself: 'Well: study. How important is that to me?' and locate that. And then well, for instance, you might, to come down to grosser things, you might

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be fond of a drop of wine. Well, just where does that come in your mandala? So take a little miniature bottle, and just put it quite honestly at the spot corresponding to that which you feel it really occupies. And then, all right; music; maybe a little musical instrument. And then, of course, you could take a little doll, a female figure! - after a great deal of thought!

: On the periphery, you mean?

S: And there are other things. So one could do this; you see the general idea? There are probably other ways of making use of the mandala; can't think of any at the moment, but certainly this has been talked about and even enacted by quite a few of our Friends.

: I've done body, speech and mind mandalas ... (few words inaudible.) ... quite useful.

S: Ah, right. In what way, how <were they> distinguished?

: Just getting people to sort of put in their mandala what they think they think about most, or (few words inaudible) and then what their activities ...

S: Ah! Yes, that's a good idea, too; because they may not necessarily correspond, these three mandalas. It would be quite interesting to see that.

Susiddhi: I was interested when you said you could draw your present mandala and a sort of more ideal mandala. That's what's called management by objectives. I used to do that; when I knew what the actual performance of my department had been, I projected what I wanted it to be the next year, and when it comes to next year you give yourself marks out of ten or whatever, and you do that year by year.

S: Well, you can do it every five years and call it a five-year plan.

Susiddhi: It's an excellent system.

S: Well, maybe every individual should do that; every centre should do that; every community should do that. I think yes, perhaps this sort of thing is necessary; otherwise we

just sort of drift along. Of course, not everybody will necessarily have the same ideal mandala, because not everybody has the same interests. When you build up your own mandala it's a question of where, with regard to the present or the future, you put your particular interests. That is probably of significance. You may, for  
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instance, find that, in your mandala of today, let's say, sports come very near the centre of the mandala; but you might decide, 'Well, that isn't really justified,' so in your ideal mandala you relegate those activities to a place much nearer the periphery, the circumference. So you aim at cutting down that particular interest in the course of the year, or you place another interest much nearer to the centre of the mandala of the future than it occupies in the mandala of the present. <You could> maybe draw these mandalas and put them up on the wall, and just ask yourself: 'Have I moved nearer to the ideal mandala - or the mandala which is ideal for me?'

Without being too precious about it, or too achievement-oriented,

I think it is quite a good thing to keep tabs on your own progress in different areas, as some way of measuring it objectively.

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Susiddhi: It sounds to me as if it would be an excellent thing for communities because you wouldn't just have one person; say you'd have six people and they could see how well they thought friendship was going, for instance, or how many people were turning up for morning meditations, more objectively; you could have quite a lot of information and then compare it with, say, last year.

S: Right, yes. You could also do it by giving yourself marks as a community; just have a list of aspects of community life - say, leaving the kitchen neat and tidy after breakfast - right, out of 10 marks, how many marks does the community get? Well, maybe this year it's only got four; well, it should aim to get 10 next year. One could do this.

Susiddhi: It does clarify things.

S: It clarifies things, yes. Or how many community evenings you had; perhaps you might find that though in theory you have one every week, when you add them all up at the end of the year you find that, perhaps, out of 52 weeks, you actually had only, say, 12 community evenings. Then <you say>, 'Good heavens, well, that isn't really enough,' and you then decide to make a concerted effort to raise that proportion. Sometimes you don't quite know where you are, whether as an individual or as a group, as a community. Or you might not realise how many times during the year you did not report in to Shabda, or you did not attend the Order weekend, etc. Or you had not written to someone you promised to write to, say, well, for so many months - or even years. Or that you had never got around  
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to reading the Dha~mapada or the Sutta Ncpata.

And time does pass. I know this very well; perhaps I know it a bit better than most of you. Time does pass very quickly, and it seems to pass more and more quickly all the time.

And if one reaches the age, say, of 40 or 50 and it starts dawning on you that you haven't made the best use of your life, that there are all sorts of things you intended to do but never got around to doing, and now it's probably too late, that can be a very sad realisation.

Abhaya: Suvajra also has a question on the mandala.

Suvaira: It is a question on mandalas and your own personal life. I have(?) heard you speak about mandalas and what effect they had on your life. (few words inaudible) if you have

had experience of coming in contact with mandalas?

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S: I've always liked mandalas, I appreciate them; but I suspect my appreciation is predominantly aesthetic. I don't think they have played a very big part, if much of a part at all, in my own spiritual life in the traditional form. But I have certainly found it very useful to think in terms of the mandala, especially thinking in terms of the mandala as regards the giving of relative importance to different things in one's life; but I can't say that I've found the mandala of importance from a practical point of view in the traditional way. That might be just because one can't do everything, and sometimes due to one's particular position - the time or place one is living - certain opportunities are limited. It could be simply that. Though I saw a lot of Tibetan mandalas in *thangka* form, none of my teachers actually said anything about mandalas. One does read about lamas nowadays drawing mandalas, and mandalas occupying an important place in certain rituals. I didn't actually come across it practically, in the course of my own contact with Tibetan lamas some years ago in Kalimpong mainly. I don't remember actually hearing of any mandala being drawn, or rituals being performed, in which one actually entered the mandala quite literally. I am not sure why that was.

I can remember one experience in connection with the mandala, and that is when I went to Pemyangtse(?), which is the chief Nyingmapa monastery of Sikkim, and one of my teachers, Kasa(?) Rimpoche, was the head lama there. I went to visit him, and in this monastery they have a three-dimensional mandala. I must say this impressed me very strongly. This had

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a very definite effect on me. I can remember it now quite vividly. I am not quite sure why. It is as though the two-dimensional mandala didn't have any effect, but the three-dimensional mandala really did, and I have thought sometimes since how good it would be to build a three-dimensional mandala. It looks like a sort of palace, you could say. I saw one when I visited, I think, Dharmsala, years and years ago when I went to see the Dalai Lama there in 1966-67. There some of the monks had built a rather small three-dimensional mandala as best they could, and again I was quite impressed by that, but not so much as by the one I had seen at Pemyangtse. There is, by the way, a photograph of the one at Pemyangtse in Marco Pallis's *Xi and Rama*. It was quite big. I think it was about as big as this circle. But it looked like a sort of palace, it had the gates and the pots and little three-dimensional figures all around. I think it was a mandala of Padmasambhava, so that might have had something to do with its



impressiveness, and it also looked like Padmasambhava's Pure Land, it was that at the same time. But this was certainly my most powerful experience with a mandala, and perhaps it is significant that it was a three-dimensional mandala. I was really quite fascinated by this. I can't remember any of the images or thankas there, but I remember this three-dimensional mandala very vividly indeed.

Virananda: In a three-dimensional mandala, is the centre spot the highest point?

S: I think not necessarily, because if it's a bit palace-like there will be pinnacles and so on with perhaps the central figure seated underneath, as under a sort of canopy. He would none the less be the central figure, the centre of the mandala.

So in that way a mandala becomes a little bit like a stupa. Because the Borobudur stupa, for instance, is a mandala, isn't it? Maybe for me, though, the mandala in the usual two-dimensional form is sort of subsumed in the stupa or the three-dimensional mandala. It is almost as though these are thoughts which occur to me just now - a flat mandala isn't really a mandala at all. I mean we usually think of a mandala as flat, two-dimensional, because that's the way we usually see the mandala, but actually the mandala is three-dimensional. So maybe I just didn't respond much to the two-dimensional mandala but only to the real thing.

Suvajra: It's not a mandala, it's only a plan.

S: It's only a plan, a ground plan as it were, yes. So you respond to  
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a building much more strongly than you respond to the ground plan of a building.

: Is there any special significance connected with the palace at the centre of the mandala.

S: I suppose here the mandala becomes a sort of Pure Land. You know, a Buddha sits in his Pure Land, underneath a beautiful canopy, etc. etc. I believe, as far as I remember, in this three-dimensional mandala I saw, there were little jewel-trees around as well, and balustrades and things like that.

There is more that could be said. Certain things are not quite coming to mind at the moment. I am not sure if Tucci, in *Theozy and Xzacttce of the Mandala*, has anything to say about the mandala as palace. But it is as though the Buddha also has the attributes of royalty, he is the king of the Dharma, so he lives as it were in a palace. And if you see Tibetan paintings, thankas of, say, Amitabha in his Pure Land, Sukhavati, he is seated in a sort of pavilion, isn't he, so that the palace is a sort of pavilion as well? You get the impression of a king and his court, or those overtones or that symbolism is sort of subsumed or incorporated into the symbolism of the mandala.

Dharmadhara: The palace or the three-dimensional mandala in Dharamsala was made like it was a double vajra, so out of each end of the four sides out of each side - was coming out as this end of the VaJra.

S: Ah, yes, that's the foundation. Those are the two cross-winds, the two cosmic cross-winds.

Because when you visualise the mandala you start off with the two crossed vajras. You may notice that on the miniature mandalas, on the metal base there are often two vajras. This represents the adamantine foundations of the cosmos. Also it's the symbol of - Aksobhya?

Voices: Amoghasiddhi.

S: Of Amoghasiddhi, yes. So the mandala rests on an indestructible foundation, not just a vajra but a double vajra, which as I said symbolises two winds, the one North to South, the other East to West; or you could say currents of energy, whatever you pleased.

Abhaya: We end with a general question from Kulamitra.

Kulamitra: I can hardly actually call this a question. We realised there  
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wouldn't be many questions; and certainly in our group it wasn't for lack of really stimulating discussion. I think it was just that, as you mentioned a couple of nights earlier, there is a certain kind of material which you don't want to question in the wrong way. But we thought we could tell you what sort of things we discussed and see whether that stimulated you.

S: Ah ha, yes.

Kulamitra: I think in our group, anyway, we took up quite early on, in the morning session, the way that the mandala has been used - at least to some extent. For instance, at Tuscany in the courtyard of Il Convento, apparently mandalas have been arranged

S: That's right, yes.

Kulamitra: - and I think we discussed ways that that could be improved, particularly calling on our own experience and also thinking of the way we'd seen in film, you know, Tibetan rituals built up and so on. And the sort of thing we thought that that helps is actively engaging with the Ideal and even acting out those

archetypes, particularly ideals. But one of the main things we had was that it needs to be directed much more.

S: Right, it needs to be produced, almost.

Kulamitra: It needs to be produced, it needs to have a director; that perhaps there needed to be a senior Order member who will in a way specialise a bit.

S: That's true, yes, that's very right. I have been thinking about this for some time, that there need to be people who specialise in liturgy; like for instance Kamalashila and the people at Vajraloka. You could say, well, they specialised in meditation; so clearly they are better at it than other Order members who don't specialise, inevitably, and they are able to help the other Order members, not to speak of Mitras and Friends. There are some Order members who specialise in more literary pursuits. Maybe Padmaloka is becoming a little bit of a centre of

literary activity. We have not only myself but Nagabodhi and Subhuti and we had formerly Ratnaprabha too.

Voice: Kovida (?).

S: And Kovida. So it could well be that certain Order members start special  
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licing in liturgy, and it's a vast subject, really. It needs a specialist, it needs properly producing. It's not just something you can do in your spare time, not if it's to be done properly.

Kulamitra: And we sort of thought that if an Order member did that, it

was something that either they could hold regularly, say every year in one place as I believe the Tibetans do, or perhaps they could go round different centres performing a certain mandala ceremony.

S: Checking up on their chanting, just basic things like that. Just as Kamalashila and his team go round checking up on postures.

I have tried to direct in small ways, not always with much response. For instance, we've had these eight offering goddesses. I still haven't got them satisfactory yet, not to my own liking. I seem to have difficulty communicating what I really want - well, I say what I want, but it doesn't seem to get across. On the occasion of the Wesak celebration, the offerings were wrongly done. There was a note in Shabda about that. Also I think the women have got to dress up for the part. If she's wearing dungarees, to give an extreme example, she doesn't look like an offering goddess, does she? I think she's got to wear some kind of long floating garment. Some of the women like that idea and others don't, they think it makes them look too feminine. But I mean an offering goddess must look a bit like that. I think we should have almost a uniform for them, you know, rainbowlike; so that it isn't just eight women going up and making offerings, it's actually sort of offering goddesses going making offerings. This is what it's supposed to be. Otherwise the symbolism is lost, it doesn't get across.

Kulamitra: I think we took that kind of approach into constructing mandalas, and we felt from what we'd seen so far that it wasn't good enough just to send people away with vague instructions to come up with something like this or that. And as far as we could tell from the Tibetan tradition, very close control was kept, with, every time a mandala was done, very similar offerings of various kinds, and we thought that the director obviously, it would be more simple to begin with than the Tibetan tradition.

S: Yes, I think we have to go back to simple elements, because the Tibetans have elaborated enormously. Look what they've done with tounas. It's  
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very beautiful, but how did it all start? What is toura? ToDra represents bal~(?), which is a sort of sacrificial offering. And really in India it was a pUt L - that's all it was, a puzzle! And

that's developed into the Tibetan *toṇḍa*, which is so elaborate and of great artistic value, very often. So we have to go back to the *pūti* ~ we can't start with the *toṇḍa*. We have to go back to the basics, to the elements.

So we have to start, I think, with the Five-Buddha Mandala. I think< this is absolutely basic for us. And people are familiar with the symbolism of the Five Buddhas. I think this is what we have to start with. And then later on, as we become more familiar or more sure with regard to the Five Buddhas, we can add other elements, we can elaborate, we can incorporate the Eight Bodhisattvas and so on. But I think we have to start with the Five Buddhas.

Kulamitra: I think what we thought was that at the moment probably too much attention, both in the making and when the mandala is as it were put into practice, goes into the construction, because it stimulates a low level of creativity, but it would be much better if that was directed, if people were told, 'You do it exactly like this.' If someone bought the materials in advance and knew exactly - a bit like what you were saying with the offering goddesses - they knew what they wanted and they got it, so when that was created it was always created in the same way.

S: More co-ordination. That's true, yes. Perhaps we should start with just a simple figure, just one figure, not even with five Buddhas.

Kulamitra: It certainly got our emotions involved just talking about it. So far we haven't done very much of this practically, because we haven't specialised, or people haven't

S: It requires time and also a little expense, buying the necessary items.

Kulamitra: Do you think spiritually it would be valuable to do more of this kind of thing?

S: I think it would be, I think it would. Obviously we need to go about it quite carefully. Maybe a little experimentation to begin with, within the Order, or perhaps within a group of Order members.

Kulamitra: Do you think it's worth doing something for the next Convention, prepared well in advance, thinking about it now?

S: I'm not sure of that. I think it would be difficult because there  
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would be too many people in too small a space. This is one of the things I want to give some thought to myself, when I can get away to some quiet place, perhaps when I'm at Guhyaloka. It is quite difficult to give thought to these sort of matters in the midst of all sorts of other activities. Or we might even do a bit of experimentation there, in a simple way.

Kulamitra: From that, we moved on in the afternoon session to looking at why a mandala should work on the mind, and why that variety of correspondences and that way of harmonising seem so universally effective in influencing the mind; and also just wondered, leading on from that, why it is that, as far as I know, no one in the Order does visualisation

practices in S msnd frm if that is so effective: whv a more formal

mandala visualisation isn't taken un.

S: Well, most people have difficulty in visualising one figure, not to speak of five or fifty. I think that's the plain and simple reason, really. I also think it's important that you get the centre of your mandala into view - you know, if you do construct a mandala you've got to have the centre of the mandala clearly in view, so this is what really the figure that you visualise represents.

Perhaps one needs to go a little bit more into the Jungian material of this sort, because Jung shows very clearly, I think, the part that the mandala plays in what he calls the individuation process - you know, whereas perhaps the Buddhist tradition with regard to the mandala starts at a point which is too far along the path, you know, to be very relevant for most people. So perhaps it would be quite useful to study Jung's treatment of this theme. He gives many concrete examples and he shows how - I mean many of his patients spontaneously produced mandala-like drawings or had mandala-like visions and so on. Otherwise - we must be very careful that we don't occupy ourselves with mandala but nothing much happens on the psychic level. Perhaps people should look at pictures of mandalas, and perhaps analyse their dreams from this point of view.

Kulamitra: Something that I mentioned in our group which I think is not so far from something you said just in this session. Since one of the sessions we had in some previous study groups course on the stupa, I can't quite get out of my mind the idea of combining the stupa and the Five-Buddha Mandala; and

S: Well, they are combined in Vajrayana tradition. You get a lot of them  
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in Nepal, and in India, too, the later period.

Kulamitra: I've been thinking more and more that the outward form of the stupa does seem to be the Buddhist architecture, recognisable throughout the Buddhist world - but I thought that perhaps it could be combined so that inside was hollow

S: Well, yes, this is also done.

Kulamitra: - and that the Five Buddhas occupied the inside in the form of a mandala.

S: Oh yes, this could certainly be done. You wouldn't easily be able to have a central Buddha. Where the Buddhas are placed on the outside of the mandala he isn't seen at all; he is assumed to be hidden, in the

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middle. You could, of course, have Vairocana in the centre, but he would have to be in the centre of the floor as it were. But perhaps he need not be there, because that's the Inexpressible, you know, multidimensional Buddhahood, the four main aspects of which are the four Buddhas that you actually see. You could have him in the ceiling.

Kulamitra: When we talked about the stupa, I quite liked the idea of having the colours of the Dhyanis, but I took your point that it was much more aesthetically pleasing just to have the white floor. But I wondered, if you did have a hollow one- in effect you had a shrine room inside - if you couldn't have a sort of squarish room with, say, a pair of yellow walls, a hollow dome which was white, and if possible a hollow cone which was a sort of pale red colour, so that from the inside you could get the colour symbols.

S: We'd have to consult the artists and interior decorators in the Movement and see what they came up with. I must say I would quite like to build a stupa. I have thought this for a long time, but stupas cost quite a bit of money and a lot of labour. It would be a good thing to do. We might do it at Guhyaloka, who knows? But it would have to be a really big one.

Kulamitra: How big is 'really big'?

S: Well, not big by Eastern standards, but at least the base as big across as this room - at least; preferably quite a bit bigger. A solid one would be relatively easy, but one that was hollow and served as a sort of temple would be more difficult, <need> quite a lot more planning, more work. Perhaps that's in the future.

Any further point? (Silence.) All right, then, that's it.

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S: A good crop of questions?

DAY SEVEN

Abhaya: We have eleven questions for you, Bhante, on this lecture, 'Zen

and the Psychotherapeutic Process'. The first question is from myself.

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You say in the lecture: 'Zen is too important to be considered under any of these headings' - i.e. Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana. Was this just a concession to the popularity of Zen at the time of the lecture?

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S: No, I don't think so. Because one could say that Zen or Chan in a

way contains elements of Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana, so it isn't really correct to allocate it to any particular yana, or even to add it on as a sort of fourth yana. For instance, Zen emphasises discipline quite strongly. In this respect it resembles the Theravada. Its basic philosophy, so to speak, is very definitely the sunya part of the Mahayana, and its very direct methods have some resemblance to those of the Vajrayana. So I did genuinely feel that one couldn't really pigeonhole Chan or Zen in that way. In some ways it represents a different kind of approach from

that which we find in that three-yana division.

I think or1 the whole in the FWBO we have tended to neglect Chan or Zen a bit - not intentionally; it takes time to get around to everything. We have an element of Zen in the FWBO in the form of the co-ops, because Zen did emphasise work in a way which the Hinayana monasticism certainly didn't. It emphasised that a day of no work was a day of no eat. But there is of course very much more to Zen than that. Perhaps some of our Friends will get around to studying or experiencing a bit more of Zen in

due course.

Abhaya: In that connection, Bhante, Ratnaguna has a question on aspects of Zen; it's relevant.

Ratnaguna: I wasn't expecting it till the end. It's JUsT a <question of> basic fact: I wondered if there's anything in Zen practice or literature that we in the FWBO could use that we're not using.

S: One could read the literature and see. But when I was reviewing some Zen classics some years ago, it struck me that the overall Chan - and it was Chan and not Zen, because it was a translation from the Chinese, not the Sapanese - that the overall Chan emphasis, or the emphasis in this

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par\_ticular classic, was concrete, non-conceptual, even poetic, very direct, and that perhaps we could learn to appreciate that sort of approach more than we do at present.

There is nothing in Chan remotely resembling the Abhidharma, unless you include the very, very late classifications of koans complete with answers - some 3,GOG of them. There is a book about this in the Order Library if anyone is interested.

So the Chan approach which, as regards its mode of expression, no doubt owes much to Chinese culture, is very, very different from the Indian.

Kuladeva: Bhante, do you know anything very much about Korean Chan, as I think it's called?

S: Ah, that's interesting; I can't say that I really know very much about it at all, but I have got several books on it which I haven't yet read. It does seem that this particular form of Zen, if one can call it that, is beginning to come into its own. It does seem a very interesting form of Zen. It seems much more accessible in some ways than either the Chinese Chan or the Japanese Zen. It seems infused with a strong poetic element also. Some quite interesting material has been appearing in The Spt ing Wind, which is a publication of an American Korean Zen organisation. But quite a few books have appeared recently - well, five or six quite important books have q~xsred within the last couple of years - on Korean Zen. So I think we have to take some note of this particular form of Zen. It does seem a quite independent form of Zen which can't be reduced either to Chinese Chan or to Japanese Zen.

Kuladeva: I heard somebody deliver a paper on it at a seminar at Sens...(?) a year ago. He

pointed out that there had been a conflict between Son, as I think it's called in Korea, and the scriptural form of BUddyisBmut eventually they were - er

S: - unified, more or less.

Kuladeva: - and that the Scriptural form became subservient to the more meditational side

S: - but wasn't excluded altogether. Kuladeva: - and that before going into sort of the meditation path, monks would usually concentrate on the scriptural side first.

S: Most of these books I've put in the Order Library, if anyone's interested in consulting them.  
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: Would you recommend any one of these books in particular?

S: I can't say that I could because I haven't really read them yet, I've only dipped into them, so I think I'd better not say anything. But there are so few of them that anyone really interested would no doubt be well advised to read them all. They all look interesting.

Not only are books on Korean Zen or Son appearing, but in America at least, and I think in France too, teachers from this tradition have been making their appearance. One of them, who heads the organisation that brings out Spring Wind, is in actual contact with us and has shown every indication of wanting closer contact.

But, on the other hand, it would seem in some respects that Buddhism in Korea, which means mainly this Buddhism, is - I won't say exactly in retreat but on the defensive, because Catholicism is spreading very extensively. The number of Catholics is increasing very rapidly indeed. It is perhaps an area where we could do something, because it seems that young people find it difficult to establish contact with the more orthodox form of the tradition. Often the monks confine themselves to the countryside and to their monasteries and don't venture into the urban areas, where of course the people, and the young people, are, and where of course the Catholic church is operating. So it would seem that if you aren't already interested and don't take the trouble of making that trip into the countryside or up some mountain to actually visit a monastery and seek instruction, you are unlikely to come into very close contact with the Buddhist tradition in South Korea. In North Korea, of course, there is a communist regime and apparently little or no overt Buddhist activity.

Suvajra: I had the impression that people in South Korea, in the cities, are interested and actually looking for Buddhism.

S: It has been suggested to me, yes - that, if not actually looking, <they> would be open.

Suvajra: So perhaps a centre there at some time in the near future might be a good idea?

S: I think so, yes. I must say the impression I get of Korean Buddhism and Korean Zen in particular, from the little I have read or come to know about it, is quite sympathetic, as it were. It seems a very human and balanced form of Buddhism; that is my overall impression.



I have also been reading, just for the sake of a little background, a translation of the ~nDL2S of a Kotean 2ueen - that's what it's called. It's a tale of court intrigue in the eighteenth century. There's not very much of Buddhism appearing in it, or hardly any at all, but it does give one a bit of secular cultural background.

Dharmapriya: Is that in the Order Library as well?

S: I've not yet put it there. It's of considerable human interest, in a way. This Korean queen - she's a princess rather than a queen; I suppose the publishers thought queen sounded better than princess - her husband was, I think, the eldest son of the king, and should have succeeded to the throne but he was an eccentric and evidently mentally disturbed character, and in the end his own father, on the advice of his own mother, who was the power behind the throne, was obliged apparently to have him put to death. So she tells this very painful story. And conflict between political expediency and family feeling, human feeling. Apparently, by the time that she was writing, nobody knew outside the court circles what had really happened, but she for the first time told the real story in these memoirs. They are really quite finely written.

But also they throw some strange sidelights on court life. For instance, her husband, the Crown Prince, used to suffer from all sorts of attacks, mental attacks, brainstorms, and he'd go completely berserk and kill people, and she'd calmly remark that the prince had a bad attack and he'd killed four ladies in waiting and so on. She'd just mention it like that as though it was of no account; not the slightest expression of regret or anything of that sort, or how unfortunate; as though the lives of servants and attendants were completely expendable. This is the impression that one gets. So one can't help wondering, then, where was the Buddhist feeling in that particular circle?

: Where they nominally Buddhist?

S: Apparently. Though, of course, there was, again, especially in court circles, a very strong influence of Confucianism; possibly - though this is not actually mentioned - I suspect that Confucianism was far stronger than Buddhism; Confucian culture was always quite strong in Korea. Apparently the Crown Prince's father, the king, was quite a learned man and fond of lecturing on the Confucian classics.

Anyway, that's by the by, since Dharmapriya seemed quite interested

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in these memoirs.

Abhaya: The next question is a two-part question from Surata on sources of information.

Surata: It's just that, Bhante. Do you know what the source of the 'Golden Flower' incident is? Do you know if it's canonical?

S: Scholars, I believe, believe that it originated in the T'ang dynasty, that story or legend, and doesn't have much historical basis. Not that that really matters, I suppose; it's a good story.

Surata: The other Dart is whether YOU know the source of the quote

where the Buddha says that all worldlings are mad.

S: I'm afraid I can't remember. I have actually come across it myself in my reading of the Pali Canon, so it is there, but I couldn't tell you offhand exactly where. Let's hope when I go through the Pali Canon again, which I hope to do some time, I shall find it. You could look yourself! Start with the Sutta SLtaka and go on to the VLnaya ~itaka if necessary. It's most likely to be in the Sutta ?ttaka; I think it is most likely to be in the Majjhima NtEaya. You could start there. It would be nice to be able to quote chapter and verse when you are sure, to newcomers to the centre, that actually they are mad!

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Abhaya: Next, Tejmitra has a question about the composition of your lecture.

Tejmitra: Do you think the lecture as a whole carries out the comparison implied in the title? Psychotherapy is spoken of in terms nf nharanter theranv for. for instance. a 45-year-old exDeriencino

dissatisfaction with love, whereas Zen is put forward as essen

tially a direct experience of Absolute Reality. Is there more that could be said about Zen with regard to, say, the novice who first comes to a monastery with his own psychological problems, and the way that that's dealt with?

S: I think in a traditional monastery psychological problems tend to be simply ignored. Not that perhaps they don't exist, but I don't think they would get any direct treatment or even recognition, or they certainly didn't. I think you joined the monastery, you were told what to do, you were given your worl<, there was your routine, and eventually you started meditating and that was that. You could bring up questions in the course of  
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your interview with the master, but I'm sure they would not-have been questions about your personal psychological problems.

I think perhaps we have to realise that the traditional Zen or Chan perspective is quite different in this respect from ours. We tend to be quite obsessed with our problems. I can't help thinking, or feeling, sometimes, that when people come to see me - not so much Order members but Mitras and Friends - the discussion (they, of course, take the initiative because they have come to see me, they want to see me) almost always, or in nine out of 10 cases, revolves around 'my problems'. I can't helpwondering sometimes whether we tacitly encourage that attitude more than perhaps we should have done. I am not saying people don't have problems or that they don't need to resolve them in some way, but I really wonder

whether it is best to be too problem-oriented or whether it is wise to encourage or allow people to be too problem-oriented. It is a form of talking about oneself, and I'm afraid that very often people are least interesting when they are talking about themselves; maybe not so much when they are talking about their work or their ideals or their hopes, but certainly when they are talking about their problems. It's really like talking about their ailments. Someone tells you that they have some stomach upset - well, OK, you can sympathise, but do you really want to hear all about it? Do you really want to discuss it with them at length - not being a doctor? So I'm afraid personal problems are sometimes a bit like that; one feels one wishes the person would just get off them. It's a form of self-preoccupation, and perhaps that is to be discouraged. Perhaps one's sympathy should be of, let's say, a more masculine type.

Dharmapriya: Presumably you were referring to psychological, emotional problems, not if it is a person talking about a spiritual problem? I remember you making the distinction in the first 'Golden Light' lecture.

S: I think there are very few spiritual problems, in the sense that people very rarely talk about spiritual problems. They are often sort of pseudointellectual pseudo-spiritual problems, if you know what I mean. People will sometimes be very worried about some point, say, with regard to sunyata that they've heard about or that they fasten on and want to discuss it at length, when clearly they are not in a fit state to do that.

I think perhaps people ought to be encouraged to take a greater interest

in more objective things. Sometimes I reflect that someone may come and spend an hour with me; during that time they have done most of the talking

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and they have spoken, in one way or another, only about themselves. So I really wonder whether one should encourage that. Though, of course, perhaps one has to try and understand what it means: why do they talk about themselves? Do they think it is the right thing to do? Is it that they feel a need for personal attention? Have any of you noticed this? Some of you must have done; people come to see you and talk about themselves and their problems. (Voices assenting.) No doubt there is a place for this and sometimes it is required, but it seems to me to be a bit obsessive sometimes, or onesided, to the exclusion of any real objective interests. For instance, it sometimes makes quite a pleasant change when someone wants to talk about a book he's read, or something like that; or, you know, their travels in a foreign country, or their ideas about their own centre, or the Movement. But as a long talk about 'How I'm feeling' and 'How I have been feeling', 'How I was feeling last week and the week before that', and 'This week I'm feeling a bit better' - it isn't very interesting for the person addressed, and I wonder if it really does the person who is speaking all that much good to go on at length in this way. Anyway, that's sort

of by the way. How did we get on to that?

Tejmitra: With Zen ignoring psychological problems. The question was whether the comparison was really being made in the lecture.

S: I think Zen addresses the more existential type of problem, but it addresses it in a more direct way. The example I gave of the man in his early 40s, well, his problem is existential; but Zen wouldn't discuss his problem, it would just say, 'Well, do this, do that.' It wouldn't talk about the problem. It would know, or think it knew, what the man should do. Whereas the ordinary psychotherapist, I believe, hasn't got much to tell a man in that sort of position about what he can do. He might even try to adjust him, which is not really what he wants at all. But even if they recognise that the problem, to use that term, is existential well, perhaps I'm a little out of date here, but most psychotherapists haven't anything to offer. There are some schools of therapy, I believe, which are beginning to recognise this - that there is a transcendental dimension to human existence and that perhaps some people's problems are brought about by the fact that they don't take this dimension into account in their lives. But I think this is a quite recent development in certain definite But psychotherapy is a very big subject, so obviously I have only been able to touch on it. And Zen is another big subject.

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There is a book by Fromm and Suzuki, I think called Zen and Psychotherapy. I don't think we've - well, we might have it in the Order Library. I know I used to have it; I'm not sure whether I still have this book.

Ratnaguna: Psychoanalysis, I think it is. It's Fromm, Suzuki and Martino.

S: Is it? Ah. Well, there is something by Fromm, too, isn't there?

Ratnaguna: There is one article by him in it.

S: We may have it in the Order Library. I think I read this when I was in India, before I returned to England, though I wasn't there reading much of this sort of literature. But it had just come out, I think.

Ratnaguna: I think I've got a copy.

Abhaya: Bhante, this preoccupation of people with their own problems. One does get the impression sometimes, when people are talking about them, there is a real desire to get out of them. But sometimes you get the feeling that they are sort of trapped in a labyrinth, and it's a sort of compensatory

approach

S: Yes, there are problems and problems. Sometimes it happens that someone has got a real problem, or at least something that they really do feel as a problem. And then you can engage with them, there is something real there. But only too often they talk about their problems in a rambling sort of way, if you know what I mean; in a self-indulgent, self-pitying sort of way, and it's that sort of thing that I am wondering whether we should encourage. Sometimes it is not even that they have got a real

problem, but they just talk about themselves, their feelings or their states, without having anything really of importance or of any great interest to say. It is just analogous to the man

who is not really ill, but he just feels a bit uncomfortable or has a little bit of a headache or stomachache, and he goes on talking and talking about that. If someone is seriously ill, well, there's something to be done; he has to be rushed to hospital and maybe operated on. That's a quite different situation. So analogously, if someone has got a real problem that they really urgently feel and are

trying to communicate, that is rather different. But that doesn't usually happen, not so far as my own experience goes.

Abhaya: Do you find you can make this distinction in your correspondence, people writing letters to you, or do you find that if they write about it, it is more genuinely their problem; or do you find they tend to dribble

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on in correspondence as well?

S: I think less so in correspondence. I think fewer, a smaller proportion of people dribble on in this way in correspondence. Or even if they do there is other material interspersed. But if they get to see me, I think the percentage of people dribbling on in this way - that's a nice expression! - is higher. I can't help wondering whether they sometimes think that this is what they ought to do when they come and see me. Have they been coached by their Order - it's usually non-Order members;; Order members don't usually do this, or very rarely. It's nearly always Mitras and Friends.

Susiddhi: The question is, what can we do to get people to think of themselves as healers rather than casualties?

S: That's true, yes. If they are casualties, fair enough, they have to be treated 2S such. But usually they are not casualties to that extent.

Tejananda: Maybe it's a reflection of the approach that people generally experience round the centres; maybe they are used to speaking in that way with Order members. I don't know; it's a speculation. Maybe we should try to make people a bit more objective themselves.

S: But it is noticeable that Order members on the whole are not like this. This is definitely noticeable. Most of the people who come to see me are Mitras and Friends. Well, Order members I do see in other situations. But most of those who come to see me individually for an interview, as they say, are Mitras or Friends.

It might be - I'm just speculating - it might be that sometimes people feel that they haven't got anything worth while to communicate, or are at a loss what to say; well, at least they can ramble on about themselves and their problems.

Saddhaloka: It might be that people feel they ought to tell you all about themselves, and telling you all about themselves that's the way it comes out.

S: Well, that's not telling me all about themselves, is it, really?

Saddhaloka: Well, maybe that's what they think they're doing.

S: Yes, perhaps people feel that that is the way to be honest or the way to be open, forgetting that that is not the only side of themselves - presumably.

Dharmapriya: In the second Udana retreat in Vajraloka, we had a daily interview with Kalamashila to help the meditation. The interviews, perhaps  
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naturally, grew longer and longer as the time went on. I don't know if it was as a result of this that Kalamashila now suggests he wants each of us to say one thing, or nothing, to him; just one thing, the most important thing; not necessarily what our difficulty was in meditation. It seemed to create quite a good situation.

S: Good, yes; ha ha! I must say, I have sometimes felt, halfway through an interview, like saying, 'Well, please stop talking about yourself and just tell me something interesting,' (laughter) but I haven't wanted to hurt anybody's feelings. Anyway, we shall see. Perhaps the word will go round!

Abhaya: The next question is from Kulamitra on the formulation of the four Zen principles.

Kulamitra: In the lecture the stanza is used to elucidate, as far as I can see, important spiritual principles, and also to some extent to suggest how these principles are followed through on the lesser psychological level of psychotherapy. But presumably the original stanza imparted a sort of spiritual shock to the ordinary Buddhist Practitioner, but as 'translated' in

the lecture it doesn't do that to me and I doubt if it does that for most Order members or Mitras. Do you think that you could put that stanza in

the form of four Precepts that would be in line with the principles but would actually have that sort of stimulating shock to us as practising Buddhists?

S: I suppose it would be possible. I wouldn't like to try to do it just at the moment! - but perhaps something will happen.

Kulamitra: I suppose I felt a bit as if the psychological dimension was, well, important but not what I am mainly inspired by; but that the stanza on its highest level was a bit beyond my reach. It sort of passed over me. But that principle must be able to be communicated in a way that Order members and Mitras rather than the general public could find a bit more stimulating.

S: Yes, the stanza seems to go back again to the Tang dynasty in China; the origin of it isn't really known, though it doesn't seem to be earlier than that. I am not sure that we even know to whom it was originally addressed or for what purpose, on what occasion. But it is, of course, very well known, and is generally accepted as a summary, in a way, of Chan or Zen  
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teaching or attitude. Yes, no doubt one can always reformulate.

Abhaya: The next question is from Tejananda on the Zen situation in the USA.

Tejananda: No, the UK. It's obvious from the talk that when you gave it in 1967 Zen was still at a uopular but rather misunderstood phase. You

refer to certain notable ex w nents of 'mouth Zen'. What are your own observations on the progress or otherwise of Zen in this countrv in the intervening 19 years?

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S: My impression is - and it's only a personal impression - that Zen isn't as popular as it used to be, which is perhaps a little surprising. We don't seem to have as many visiting Zen teachers as before. In the early days of the FWBO there were quite a number of visiting Zen teachers. We had contact with some of them. That doesn't seem really to happen now. I don't know why. But we do have the Throssel Hole Priory, which is a branch of the Shasta(?) Abbey in the USA. We have some friendly contact with them. And there is Irmgard Schloegl's Zen class or group which she is still taking, which I believe has altogether about 80 members. I am not aware of any other Zen group, or at least any other really established Zen group. That would seem to be a very small representation, if you consider how popular Zen was years and years ago.

It is perhaps a bit interesting that Zen doesn't seem to be very popular, even as reading matter, in the FWBO itself; which perhaps is something of an omission. I can't profess to account for this. Tibetan Buddhism has grown greatly, so has Theravada, but not Zen. There are dozens and dozens of Tibetan groups of one kind or another, and Tibetan lamas are always coming over. Perhaps it is just the superior attractiveness of Tibetan Buddhism. But on the other hand, the Theravada is much more active than it was in those early days of the FWBO.

The thought has crossed my mind - I am not sure whether this is in fact the case - I am just wondering whether some of those people at least who would have become interested in Zen haven't joined the FWBO instead. That is a possibility, but I am not too sure about that. Because we do teach meditation, and a lot of people who went along to Zen groups and Zen classes were people who were interested in meditation; so it could be that we have absorbed some of those people. But I wouldn't be very

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sure about that. I mention it just as a possibility. Zen seems to be much more successful in the States than in Britain - well, successful at least in organisational terms.

Suvajra: I wonder if it could just be a reflection of the fact that Zen teachers, for some reason, have concentrated maybe on the States rather than on this country, and built up

S: Mm, but there again Tibetan lamas have concentrated on the States. They seem to have a better response there. But none the less, there has been, one might say, a proportionate concentration on the UK - I say proportionate inasmuch as the UK is a much smaller place. Ditto as regards the Theravada. The Theravadins have done better, I think, in the UK than

they have in the States, much better. But Tibetan Buddhism seems to have done very well practically everywhere; it seems to have the widest appeal of all the forms of traditional Buddhism. But that could change, because, as I said, 20 years ago, I think Zen was definitely the most popular traditional form of Buddhism in the West.

: This could only be speculation, but maybe in a way the perceived tone of Zen was more appropriate to certain aspects of the 50s and 60s, whereas maybe the outer appearance of Tibetan Buddhism fulfils that more now.

S: It could be. Also I think the fact is that many Tibetan teachers come as refugees, so they attract additional sympathy. That is not the case with people who come in from Japan to teach Zen. So I think Tibetan lamas, at least initially, can get a lot of support from people who are not necessarily Buddhist or even interested in Buddhism, but to sympathise with them as refugees from communist oppression, or whatever. That at least enables them to get a good start.

Suvajra: Bhante, you said that we don't have the same number of Zen teachers visiting as we used to have some years ago. Is that perhaps because we don't encourage them now?

S: No, I think they don't seem to come to Britain. In those days, those who did come to Britain usually made contact with us, as well as with other Buddhist groups, but I am not aware of any coming these days, at least not to stay or to teach. One doesn't see any references to them in the press or in Buddhist magazines as one used to. It might be to do with the  
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situation in Japan, because we are getting a lot of Nichirenites now, of one kind and another.

: How do you see the Nichiren movement? (?)

S: Well, one does hear that all is not well with Zen in Japan, and it could be that they are coping with their own problems, as it were, rather than trying to spread Zen in the West; whereas the Nichirenite groups seem to be large, successful and wealthy and are spreading more and more in the West.

: And presumably in Japan as well.

S: Oh, yes, of course. I mean they spread in the West from their bases in Japan. They have got money for expansion, they've got money to send people, they've got money for literature. It could be that - this is speculation, but I think there is something in this - that the situation in Japan with regard to Zen is such that they can't operate in this way, that they don't perhaps have the resources. I certainly have read in American Buddhist publications articles which mention the poor state of Zen in Japan and the small number of people meditating in the monasteries. In fact, some articles have even maintained that there are more real followers of Zen in the States than there are in Japan itself. So this could have something to do with the fact that we are not seeing so many Zen teachers or

masters.



It could also be a natural wave, because Zen was the first to become really popular and well-known, and perhaps therefore it has been the first to die away. The same thing may well happen with Tibetan Buddhism, though it probably has been a rather bigger wave.

Dharmapriya: As we are talking about these other trends, an impression I have got from the magazine of one of the Nichiren movements - the same people who did the Thzeefold Lotus Sutza, Niwano was the name of the person? - it reminded me far more strongly of fundamentalist Protestantism than of Buddhism. I suppose my question is: these new Nichirenmovements, how far would you dub them dharmic and how far would you dub them, you might say, a transplantation of Protestantism on s nominally dharmic framework?

S: Well, Dr. Conze has doubted whether Nichlren was a true Buddhist teacher, on account of his very intolerant attitude towards all other forms of Buddhism. He <Nichiren> denounced one particular school - I think it was the Zen school-- as 'the school of devils', and he was very, very strong

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and intemperate in his language. And of course he was intensely nationalistic. And much of that does pass over into most of the Nichiren offshoots, or offshoots of offshoots. So one could quite justifiably wonder to what extent these were genuinely dharmic movements. But no doubt one would need to investigate each one on itsown merits before coming to any definite conclusion. But they are certainly very active in Britain, and they claim to have more adherents than any other form of Buddhism in Britain. It may be so. They seemvery family-oriented. They emphasise the family practising together, chanting together, and so on. I was also reading one of their publications a few days ago, and Inoted that when referring to their followers in Japan, they reckoned them in the traditional way according

to families, not individuals; that they had so many families belonging to their movement. Needless to say, that is not the FWBO approach!

Abhaya: Shall we have one more question before tea?

S: Righto.

Abhaya: Also from Tejananda, on Confucianism and authoritarianism.

S: The dreaded bogey ofauthoritarianism has raised its head at last!

Tejananda: In the lecture you speak in terms of the tendency of monotheistic religions to be authoritarian, and for non-monotheistic religions to be non-authoritarian, and you cite Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism as examples. However, in our group there was a certain amount of disagreement about the degree to which Confuci- anism is really non-authoritarian. In fact, certain parties

held that it was a distinctly authoritarian system. Could you comment on this?

S: I think it is a bit authoritarian, in the same way that you would say that the Theravada is

authoritarian, but by way of a deviation to some extent from the spirit of that particular tradition. If you read the Fnalects of Confucius, he seemsto have been a very non-authoritarian personality, and his teaching seems verynon-authoritarian. But it was as it were taken over or adopted by the state and became the prescribed orthodoxy, and in that way did, yes, assume an appearance of authoritarianism. But you could say the same thing about Theravadin authoritarianism and fundamentalism those not being characteristics, really, of the Buddha's teaching. But therefore, in the case of the Theravada, since it is in any case a form

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of Buddhism, its tendency towards authoritarianism is very much restrained. It doesn't amount to the Christian authoritarianism. Similarly with Confucianism; even when it is authoritarian, it is not authoritarian in the way that Islam is, for instance. There is no comparison at all.

Dharmapriya: Bhante, how is the Theravada authoritarian? What tendencies do you see?

S: Well, Ithink the obvious ones I have mentioned in the Suzuey - I mean, it is connected with fundamentalism: that the Pali Canon is the complete Word of the Buddha and no deviation from that is permitted. This is what it really amounts to. Though, of course, Zen can be a bit authoritarian. I think this is a manifestation of the gravitational pull: the teaching itself can start off absolutely immaculate, pure love mode, but the gravitational pull gets to work, and if that teaching, despite its great merits, is embraced by imperfect people, they tend little by little to distort it. Sometimes the nature of the teaching is such as to counteract that to some extent, even to a great extent, but if the teaching itself is autho

ritarian to begin with and is adopted by an authoritarian personality, you can imagine what sort of result we get. There is a little rhyme I made up:

'Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,

Sends to hellthe unbaptised child.' Do you see what I mean?

: I thought they mentioned limbo?

S: Well, yes, according to some forms of thought, they do, but not all Christians believe in limbo. But all Christians believein hell - all good Christians, anyway.

Dharmapriya: I think the Catholic cnurch has dissolved limbo, actually. So far as I understood, they have officially abolished limbo.

S: I don't think that you are obliged, as a Catholic, to believe in limbo as a matter of faith, as you are, say, in the Assumption or in the Immaculate Conception. St. Augustine said thathellwas paved with the skulls of unbaptised infants. (Gasps of horror.) How do they think up these things?

Abhaya: Shall we have tea on that note?

S: Let me just make one little point. I have come to the conclusion that

fundamentalist-cum-authoritarian attitudes at present seem to cut across  
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religions. It is possible to meet, for instance, Christians who are nonfundamentalist and non-authoritarian in their attitude while remaining

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convinced Christians, and it is possible to come across Buddhists, unfortunately, who are rather fundamentalist and authoritarian in their attitude; so the question arises, is it more easy to communicate with a non-fundamentalist and non-authoritarian Christian, or with a fundamentalist and authoritarian Buddhist? I think it is quite a fine point. I think probably it is easier to communicate with the non-fundamentalist and non-authoritarian Christians, which is rather strange, but I think we have to admit that that is sometimes the case and consider its implications.

Anyway, we'll close on that note, shall we? I might be writing something about this. This has arisen out of a little article I read in a Buddhist magazine about a get-together between Hans Kung, the German - is he German? - theologian and a group of Buddhists in the States. I have been thinking about this.

Abhaya: Is he a Catholic?

S: Oh yes, he is a Catholic, though I think he has recently been

Abhaya: His writings are, not condemned, but controlled by the Pope's

S: I think he isn't recognised as a Catholic theologian, officially, any longer. I think this is what the position is.

Dharmapriya: His licence to teach Catholic theology at university was withdrawn six years ago.

S: That's right, yes.

Dharmapriya: And he wrote a public letter addressed to the Pope asking him to justify the action. I don't know if it was answered.

S: He is a critic of infallibility. He has written a book called *On the Possibility of Dialogue*, with a question mark. But he is most famous for his book *On Being a Christian*. That is considered quite a modern classic. I haven't read it, but one sees it everywhere, or it is mentioned wherever his name is mentioned. But he is a very well-known and influential theologian. And he is interested, apparently, in getting to know Buddhists and having some kind of dialogue with them. I thought I might write something on this topic, arising out of his meeting with these American - or, actually, it was Canadian - Buddhists, and perhaps send a copy to him. We shall see. It is one of the things I might do in Italy.

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(Tea interval)

Abhaya: So the next question is from Mahamati about stockbrokers.

S: Ah, when I looked through my notes I wondered about this. I wondered whether this was going to be taken very seriously or not. Anyway, let's

hear it.

Mahamati: I was struck in the lecture by the example of the stockbroker.

S: I must say I was being deliberately provocative. It was the very early days of the Movement. We had some very sober, respectable people in those days coming along!

Mahamati: I wondered whether it was a symbol of the immoral society. In the 60s it was the sort of thing that one would hold up as an example of - well, a symbol, in a way.

S: I don't know that one would have done, particularly. I was conscious of being provocative and deliberately so. I think a few eyebrows were raised, especially when I juxtaposed the stockbroker, say, with the butcher didn't I?

Mahamati: The tobacconist.

S: Ah, the tobacconist, that's right; and who else? There was another category.

Mahamati: The tax consultant.

S: The tax consultant. I mean, I assumed that the tax consultant would be basically dishonest and would be helping you to find loopholes. I was just being a bit provocative. But I was very conscious at that time of the power of money. I remember a very vivid experience: I am not sure whether I was walking or being driven by a friend through the City of London - perhaps I hadn't been through it in that way before since my return to England, and this was in the early days of the FWBO - I really became conscious of the power of Mammon, seeing all these enormous buildings, these banks and insurance companies all around, and I had a very strong experience of oppressiveness and of the sheer power and weight of money, of capital; and I said to the person who was with me, 'This is what actually we are up against.' So it may have been that my remarks in this lecture were based to some extent on that sort of feeling, the feeling that I had going through the City of London. I remember it was a very vivid experience, and I felt

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something quite tangibly, as it were: all this clotted wealth.

Mahamati: There was no intention to condemn all stockbrokers - ?

S: Well, no, obviously - well, I'm not sure; I'm not sure. Because when stockbroking is part of the capitalist system it would depend on one's evaluation of the capitalist system. I can't really say I believe in capitalism, but I can't say that I really believe in what some people believe is the alternative to capitalism; all those systems seem pretty unsatisfactory. You look on the one hand to the United States, on the other hand you look to Soviet Russia; well, they both have very unsatisfactory features; it is sometimes difficult to know which system one would really choose to live under. I suppose, in the long run, one would probably opt for the United States, but rather regretfully or not very happily, because at least - well - apparently, you can speak your mind a bit more than you can in Soviet Russia. On the other hand, in Soviet Russia you don't have advertisements. There is a lot to be said for that. Also you've got lots of nice, kind people running the country for you, you don't have to bother! Just get on with your own private life - well, up to a point! Sometimes you might find yourself in a nice private cell somewhere, or a very private labour camp. But probably one would opt for living in the United States, but again, not really very happily. (Oh dear, this is all going down on tape!)

But some features of capitalism are really quite disgusting, one has to say that. It is very difficult to see one's way to a solution, other than that which we have propounded within the FWBO. At least we have made a very tiny, tiny start with our centres, co-ops and communities, our nucleus of a new society. It's a very tiny start. Think of the amount of our capital. But it isn't exactly twopence halfpenny (well, we don't have halfpennies

any more), but not very much more, proportionately. And other organisations and institutions have got billions of money. But with luck we'll do them down in the end.

I think perhaps we will have to take much more seriously this question of earning wealth. We are very poor as a movement, and a lot of our activities are restricted on that account. We are really hampered by lack of funds. I think very often people don't realise that, what a poor movement we are and the extent to which our work is hampered by sheer lack of funds. We could do a lot more if we had more money. I think sometimes people for understandable reasons, but sometimes out of mistaken idealism - think

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that we can literally run the Movement on a shoestring. Well, the basis of the Movement is spiritual, but at the same time you need certain facilities for which you usually have to pay. If you think in terms of publications, publications cost money. We have to pay printers; we have to support the people bringing out the publications, distributing them. So perhaps as a Movement we should be more aware of the need for money, not just leave it to the chairmen and the councils or the Order Office. Anyway, enough about that.

Abhaya: Mahamati also has a question on attracting people to the Movement.

Mahamati: There was discussion in our group arising out of the distinction between therapeutic adjustment to an immoral society and true character therapy and development.

<In> the FWBO in England, most people are living and working apart from mainstream society. However, we do come across quite a lot of people in England with a genuine interest in Buddhism, who are firmly established

in a professional and family lifestyle. So far, few of such people have turned their interest in Buddhism into involvement with the FWBO, and hardly any their involvement into commitment.

So there are two questions. First: could it be that the FWBO in England is too narrow in respect of lifestyle? And secondly: what can Order members do to encourage full~

participation in the FWBO by people who currently have a professional and family lifestyle?

S: Would you just repeat that first question again?

Mahamati: Could it be that the FWBO in England is too narrow in respect of lifestyle?

S: Too narrow in respect of lifestyle? Could one elaborate on that?

Mahamati: Well, what I had in mind was most people living in single-sex communities and working either in centres or in co-ops set up within the FWBO.

S: In a way we are too narrow, but I think not quite in the way that you think. I think we need to expand on both wings, as it were. I think perhaps we do have to bear in mind more the needs of the person who, on coming into contact with the FWBO or developing a spiritual interest of any kind, has already got, say, a wife and a family and a job and can't really very easily give them up. So I think we have to bear in mind that constituency, as it were. But I think we are quite lacking on the opposite wing, too, because

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we have far too few people, I think, leading a more monastic type of life. I think it is very difficult to be really full-time if you aren't leading a virtually monastic kind of life, because so much of your energy and emotion go away from the spiritual life and FWBO activities. So I think we are a bit lacking in both respects. I think we need on the one hand to appeal more to people who already do have worldly responsibilities, and on the other hand to people who have such a high degree of, say, idealism and potentiality for spiritual commitment that they don't want to compromise in the way that many of our Friends, even Order members, do compromise. I think we fail to appeal, sometimes, to those sort of people, too. I think we don't make sufficient provision for those who have as it were a natural inclination to a more monastic type of life.

So on the whole I would agree that, yes, perhaps our range of lifestyle is too limited, but I think even more limited than perhaps you had thought in this respect. For instance, I am thinking of the fact that the Theravada movement is growing. Do any of you know how many people in Britain they now have in robes of one kind or another - not necessarily bhikkhus? Have any of you any idea? I am thinking not of Chiswick, not of Wimbledon; I am thinking of the more or less indigenous British monastic order. Anyone got any idea?

: I saw about 15 of them coming out of the British Museum

a year ago. S: But how many in the UK as a whole do you think there are, connected, say, with Chithurst? Anyone got any idea?

Mbhamati: Well, when we went down to Amarati we saw I would say at least 40, and I know they weren't all there.

S: Yes, there are about 50, 51 or 52. So they are all in robes; they are not all bhikkhus - some are bhikkhus, some are sanane<sup>2</sup>as S some are anagazikas or anaga<sup>2</sup>ikas, but there are 50. And they are all celibate. Now maybe there is a proportion of those who are celibate for, let us say, neurotic reasons - that is quite possible, quite likely. But none the less, it means that there are quite a large number of people committed to celibacy. So perhaps we are missing out on that sort of constituency, too, because people who have an inclination to that sort of life, leaving aside those who might have an inclination to it for neurotic reasons, aren't going to be attracted to the FWBO or to the Western Buddhist Order as at

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present it functions. They will see a very mixed sort of situation; even though, yes, we do have men's communities, most of the men, in most of the communities, have girl friends outside, and ditto for the women who live in women's communities.

So, on the one hand, perhaps we are not appealing to the definitely non-monastic, nor are we appealing to the definitely monastic or potentially monastic. But, on the other hand - this is another sort of difficulty one doesn't want to present a blurred image. A movement needs to have a definite individuality. If you try to be too broad and too many things to too many people, you just end up creating no particular impression. So no doubt that has to be avoided. None the less, I think there is room for a broadening out in respect of lifestyle on both fronts. I am not sure how we are going to do it. Though, on the other hand, there has been a little bit of broadening out recently, because I was talking to a Mitra from Croydon recently, and he made a bit of a joke of it that at his Mitra ceremony he was one of four men Mitras, all of whom had jobs and families. And he said it was a bit of a joke, because it was quite a new development for Croydon! So, even in Croydon, it's happened, you see! They've actually got Mitras who don't live in the community and don't work in the co-op. So I think this is a quite healthy development. And it does seem that those Mitras have - at least, this one did - a genuine admiration for those men, Order members and Mitras alike, who did live in communities and did work in the co-op. They were full of admiration for them, but none the less recognised that it wasn't possible for them to do likewise, though they were spiritually very much with them and wanted to be part of the Movement. And this particular person who came to see me actually asked for ordination, though he made it clear that, in view of his domestic commitments - I can't remember if he had children, but he certainly had a mortgage - he wouldn't be able to give up his job and wouldn't be able to come on the pre-Tuscany retreats and all that sort of thing. But he did want to be ordained, and I felt he was perfectly sincere, as much as anybody else who asked.

But a bit of broadening out, I think, on both fronts <is needed>. I think the FWBO could attract, let's say, the householder type of person more easily than the person who was

very much inclined to monastic life. I think such people, if they came along to our centres, wouldn't get a very as it were monastic impression, very often; even though our womenfolk

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are reasonably well behaved now. But obviously it is a very mixed type of situation, which wouldn't appeal to that kind of person. Sometimes they might feel that people in the FWBO, even Order members, aren't very strict; I don't mean strict in the narrow sense, but strict in the positive sense - aren't very conscientious in certain respects. I mean they might even hear that there are some Order members who don't mind going to the pub and getting a bit drunk - well, that doesn't go down very well, you know, with someone who is thinking of or looking for a quite strictly Buddhist group, with an emphasis on monasticism. So I think we are missing out on that constituency.

So, in short, I would like to see a few more anagazLkas of both sexes. This is what it really means. I know it's difficult for younger Order members, but as they start approaching the 40s perhaps they could start thinking, at least some of them, along these sort of lines. Some of you will be approaching 40, or one or two of you - or one at least has overshot that particular mark, well, maybe two of you, I'm not sure - but quite a few of you will be approaching it in a few years' time.

Susiddhi: Bhante, do you know how many of the 50 that you've mentioned are women and how many men?

S: Well, I'm not sure, but I think at least half are women, and possibly more than half. Or very likely more than half. And I think among the women there's quite a preponderance of quite old women. So perhaps one should bear that in mind, too. But none the less, there's quite a few

young or youngish men.

Mahamati: There's quite a few young women as well.

S: And young women, too, yes.

Susiddhi: I remember when I was at Manjushri Institute years ago, I was paying a visit, that of their monastic Sangha about two-thirds were women. I think there is a high proportion of women also at Throssel Hole.

S: But is celibacy required? - (Susiddhi: Yes.) because at Throssel Hole, to the best of my knowledge, they only require celibacy on the premises. For instance, you can go as a married couple but you are not allowed to live together as a married couple while you are actually there on retreat or whatever. But when you go home you resume your married life.

Susiddhi: Well, at Manjushri they have taken the vow of celibacy on and off the premises. I don't know about Throssel Hole.

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S: So this is an interesting question. How is it that the FWBO doesn't attract more people of that kind? Could it be that most of them do actually have problems with sexuality and that celibacy is an escape? I have certainly seen this in the East, so one has to consider that possibility, too. There is a question of being celibate for the right reasons, not simply of being celibate.

: I must say that, of the 15 or so people that I saw coming out of the British Museum, they didn't impress me very much. They looked a bit sickly

S: Ah. Maybe it is something we should give some thought to, because we do want to attract anyone who is genuinely interested in spiritual life and development, regardless of the particular lifestyle that suits them; so we don't want to give the impression, as far as is practicable, that we are committed to one lifestyle rather than to another. Though it may be that certain lifestyles are really more appropriate to the living of the spiritual life than are others. But perhaps there is the need for a bit of flexibility. I do feel that we are strong enough as a Movement now to be able to carry, as it were - if that is the right word - some people who are living in the world and discharging their mundane responsibilities, while being fully committed to the Dharma and in full contact with other Order members. It does obviously require quite a bit of extra effort on the part of those people to keep in touch if they are living at home with their family and if they've got a regular job. But I'm sure it can be done if there's real determination. And even people who live in singlesex communities and work in co-ops aren't always perfect, are they?

Abhaya: The next question is from Ruchiraketu.

Ruchiraketu: Yes, I haven't really got a definite question, but it's related to the Transcendental.

I often find that when we start talking about the Transcendental I start to feel a bit uncomfortable. I think it's because I can relate if there's emphasis on direct experience, but when we start talking about 'The Transcendental' I sometimes - I don't find it very clear in what sense we are talking about the Transcendental. And I wonder what is the connection between this emphasis on direct experience and transcendental Insight?

S: Well, of what kind of experience is one thinking when one talks of experience? One is thinking in terms of the experience of positive mental states, in fact of an uninterrupted flow of positive mental states. And

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when that flow becomes irreversible, one is talking of the Transcendental, or transcendental experience. But I do know, I have found talking to people and sometimes reading their letters, that sometimes they invoke the Transcendental with a capital T rather too glibly, and one feels it doesn't really have any meaning, any content; and maybe when that happens one feels a little, as you say, uncomfortable, because there's no communication. They're just using a word to which they don't really attach any meaning or any content. So to that extent there's a

lapse of communication and perhaps they don't realise it. So perhaps one needs to bring them down to earth a little, gently, and be careful that one doesn't oneself use this term glibly or too readily - certainly not introduce it without preparation or without being fully aware of exactly what you mean by that.

Ruchiraketu: I also find it a bit difficult to get an idea of what is the non-dual, subject-object, sort of, er

S: Well, obviously, it's difficult. I mean there's an illustration I gave years ago which I still think is the best one: that overcoming subjectobject duality doesn't mean cancelling them both out, but it's something like the experience you have when you, say, play a musical instrument, and you are fully at one with what you are doing. Subject is merged in object; you as the player are merged in the music, in the act of playing. You don't any longer distinguish between them. I think this is perhaps the nearest we can get to it by way of analogy or comparison.

Abhaya: Tejananda has a question about Mr. Chen.

Toionnnd e fnr nn T knnw vntir nwn main personal contact with Zen or

Chan tradition was through Mr. Chen. I wondered if you might have any Zen anecdotes about Mr. Chen that perhaps you haven't told before, or any other personal account of Zen that you'd

like to tell us about?

S: I can't think of any offhand. I think any encounters I had with Zen after coming back to Britain were mainly unpleasant. But one can't judge Zen by those experiences. I can't offhand recollect any further anecdotes about Mr. Chen. I have written about Allen Ginsberg's meeting with Mr. Chen: some of you might be interested in reading about that. I was invited to contribute an article to a Xestschtift that was brought out in honour of Allen Ginsberg on the occasion of his 60th birthday - he is about a year younger than myself. So I contributed a three-page essay, on Allen Ginsberg  
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in Kalimpong. I took him to see Mr. Chen because he was very interested in Tantra at that time; his interest was rather unhealthy, as I make clear in this article. But if anyone would like to read it, I do have a copy of this TestschtLf t. I won't say anything about his meeting with Mr. Chen. I'll leave you to read it for yourselves if you're interested. It's quite a nice production, this book. Some of the messages are really not very worth while, but it's interesting that so many people should have contributed - about 200 of them altogether. So if anyone's interested they can just come and borrow this from me and return it before you go back. It's only a three-page article. I was rather pleased with it, I must say. I wrote it last year in Italy and I wrote it quite carefully, so I think from a literary point of view it's one of my better efforts. I mean this is what I think; you may disagree, but this was my own feeling.

Tejananda: Have you had any effective encounter with any other Zen teachers other than Mr.

Chen?

S: I don't think so. Of course, Mr. Chen didn't profess to be a Zen teacher, but he had a quite deep experience of Chan, I am convinced. Though he was a very strange, a very mixed character. I think one had to deal with Mr. Chen, in a way, very selectively. He had a very great deal of knowledge, a very great deal of quite deep understanding and experience, but it was mixed up to a great extent with extraordinary eccentricities and unreliabilities, and one had to be able to sort the one from the other. A very strange, bizarre character in many ways.

Tejananda: Do you still have any contact with him?

S: Not very directly. He still sends us some of his booklets, he is still publishing booklets, but some of them are rather bizarre, not very useful. We have some of the later ones, I think, in the Order Library. But there is no doubt about his very great knowledge. It is just a pity he is not able to communicate it more effectively. His character, his persona if you like, just gets in the way of, in a sense, his deeper self. I think you have to be very sympathetic and attentive to get from him the best that he can offer. You can be very easily put off Mr. Chen, or catch hold of relatively superficial things about him, even some of his eccentricities, and give overmuch importance to those.

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(Beginning not recorded)

S: .... editing, huh? Unedited Chen is pretty unintelligible, and even misleading.

Suvajra: What do you make of Mr. Chen's booklet on MedctatLon and the Thzee Vanas which he dedicated to you?

S: It's quite good. It's also had the benefit of being edited by myself and Khantepalo(?). His clearer booklets have usually been edited by myself and Khantepalo. The English is usually much better than in some of his other pamphlets. One or two have been translated directly from the Chinese by American scholars, I think, and they, of course, read quite well. His Chinese, apparently, is excellent, but his English certainly isn't.

Abhaya: There is just one more question from Surata about the Russian scholar.

Surata: Would you recommend us to have a look at any of the works of Soloviev?

S: Oh! (Pause.) Well, I certainly wouldn't stop anyone who is interested in reading him from reading him. He is quite interesting in many ways: not always easy going, but one would need to be able to relate what one read of him to Buddhism and general knowledge and so on, and one might not find it easy to do that. One of his most interesting writings is his Narration of Antichrist. There is a dialogue - I forget the full title - but it is about war and peace, basically, a sort of Platonic-type dialogue, and at the end one of the characters gives this Narration of Antichrist, about the Last Days. It's a sort of quite impressive piece of writing from a literary point of view, sort of apocalyptic, very vividly descriptive and very much concerned with the problem of evil, especially evil in the form of a personal devil or Antichrist. I t ve got a

number of his works in the Order Library. There's his book on The Theozy of the good, and - what else have I got? There is a volume of Selecttons; his Sectuzes on GodManhood, which is very interesting indeed. But he is not very easy going. But it's certainly very interesting.

I think perhaps the best approach is via a volume of studies - I forget the author's name, a Russian - there's a study in one volume of Dostoievsky, Soloviev, and a third figure, I forget who it is at the moment. Might have been Bulgakov. But that is quite a good introduction. There's another

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work, I think - or maybe I'm mixing up two things - Solouteu the Sfissian Xzophet. Maybe it's good to read something a bit introductory first, to get a bit of background. But he is a quite extraordinary and quite fascinating character. Again a man who led a very ascetic life, almost a saintly life, one might say. He is very highly regarded by all the people who knew him. He had some quite extraordinary spiritual experiences. A very courageous man. For instance, the Tsar of those days, I think it was Alexander II, was assassinated, and Soloviev at a public meeting publicly appealed to the new Tsar to set an example of Christian forgiveness and forgive his father's murderer. There was absolute consternation in the audience, for this was in the days of Tsarist autocracy. So one of his official superiors was there at the meeting and insisted he drove at once to the Home Ministry to explain himself; which he did. And he also wrote a letter of explanation to the Tsar, explaining exactly why he made this appeal, and there was quite a hullabaloo over this and great scandal. But in the end he was only reprimanded. So he had very great courage and believed in his principles, and was prepared to suffer for them if necessary; he would not be silent. So quite an extraordinary sort of character.

He was deeply interested in Eastern wisdom and had some interest in Theosophy and Gnosticism and so on, as well as Eastern Orthodox Christian tradition. He studied Catholicism and Protestantism quite deeply, too, learned many languages. A quite unusual character. His lectures, very serious lectures, which he gave in Moscow and on which some of his books were based, used to attract the most cultured and intelligent people of his time, including people like Tolstoy, Dostoievsky - he was quite a close friend of Dostoievsky. Those who read The Bzothets Kazanazov know about the character Father Zosima; and you know about Dostoievsky's visit to the monastery, where he met the man on whom he based Father Zosima. He paid that visit in the company of Soloviev; they went together; they were at that time quite close friends. So he is a quite interesting character. He is not very well-known in this country, but I think he is deserving of being better known. He looked very ascetic; very thin and cadaverouslooking, with long tsir also, quite wild looking. He was also a bit of a poet, wrote some poetry, most of it semi-mystical poetry.

Anyway, anything else?

Abhaya: That's all on paper.

S: All right, then.

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## DAY EIGHT

Abhaya: We have eleven questions for you on this lecture ('The Heart Sutra'). The first is from Surata on the context of the lecture itself.

Surata: Yes, it's with reference to the chanting, Bhante. I found it interesting that on that tape there are presumably some Theravada bhikkhus chanting in Pali the Refugees and the Mangala Sutta, as far as we could work out, and then you launch into the Heart Sutra. So I was wondering what the context of the talk was, if you can remember.

S: I have only the very vaguest of recollections. It must have been at Centre House. I think probably they were present and perhaps we just invited them to chant, to make them feel at home and that they were making some contribution to the proceedings. It may also have been that I wanted our own Friends and members just to hear a bit of chanting. These are just guesses. I think those probably were the reasons.

Suvajra: Were the bhikkhus introduced? (?)

S: I can't remember. Perhaps we had just invited them out of politeness or whatever; I can't remember. Usually I didn't have anyone introducing me as far as I recollect. It's so far back I just don't remember. It must be getting on for 18,19 years. I can't think who it might have been.

: It sounded like it was a celebration of some kind.

S: That could have been so, yes. Let me see if there is a date on the notes. Sometimes I dated them, but I have not dated this one. It could have been in connection with Wesak or something like that. But I imagine I would then have made some reference to the fact.

Ruchiraketu: You mention in the lecture that it's a holiday season and you are surprised that so many people have turned up for the whole day.

S: Ah, then in that case it was at one of our day seminars. I sometimes gave two lectures in the course of a day seminar, one in the morning and one in the evening, and we could have invited these bhikkhus, or they could have just come along. I have no distinct recollection at all.

Abhaya: The second question is from Sarvamitra, a double question on sources.

Sarvamitra: When talking in the lecture about the dialogue between Avalokitesvara and Sariputra, where in the dialogue Sariputra doesn't say anything, you give an illustration from a Christian mystic,

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who says, 'Reason dies giving birth to ecstasy.' Do you happen to remember which Christian

mystic this was?

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S: Oh dear. I don't remember. I've got it in one of my old notebooks somewhere where I keep extracts and quotations. At a guess I think it was probably someone like Suso (?)

Sarvamitra: Who is Suso?

S: Suso was - oh - he was one of the Rhineland mystics of the Middle Ages, along with Eckhardt and Tauler. There were three: Eckhardt, Tauler and Suso. It may well have been him, but I won't be sure of that. I'd have to look up my notebooks. Or, no, it might have been someone completely different. It might have been Richard of St. Victor. (Voices: Oh!) I'd better not guess any more. I'll just look up one of my old notebooks. It was a medieval mystic.

: Who was the other one, Bhante - Eckhardt and - ?

S: Tauler. You've heard of Eckhardt, surely? (Voices: Mm.) And possibly Tauler? And Suso. These were the most prominent representatives of a particular school of mysticism, roughly in the area where Dharmapriya and Dhammaloka are at present operating.

Sarvamitra: The other question was: You say that 90 years ago they found an original Indian palm-leaf manuscript in a Japanese temple, and none was ever found in India. You say that it wasn't a Zen temple. Can you remember

anything more about it?

S: I can't remember, but you can find out quite easily, because the information must be contained in the translation of this text in the 'Sacred Books of the East' series. It might have been a Shingon temple, but I won't be sure of that. You'd just have to look it up. Once again, I just don't remember. But the information should in this case be quite easy to discover, because, to the best of my recollection, in his introduction to the translation of this text from the palm-leaf manuscripts, Max Muller gives an account of the manuscripts themselves and where they were discovered. It is interesting and significant that they survived in Japan but not in India.

Abhaya: The next question is from Tejamitra on the source of your exposition of the sutra - It is Tejamitra, isn't it? - whether the exposition is Bhante's own, or from commentaries.  
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Tejananda: I think you might be slightly misrepresenting my question.

Abhaya: Oh, I'm very sorry, Tejananda.

Tejamitra: I'll hand you over to my Teja brother.

Tejananda: Well, mine is quite a simple one.

I wondered if v/nsir oYnneitinn nf tho srtrilrttirP nr fnrm nf thf? sutra, and your emphasis on its being equally important with the content, is based on your own study and understanding, or does it come from some commentarial source? Is the tradition

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S: I'm afraid it's original! This occurred as I studied and reflected on it myself. I mean 'the medium is the message' sort of thing, if you know what I mean. I think I used the expression 'the frame is part of the picture'. (Voices assenting.) In one should always be on the lookout for things like this.

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Make sure that in giving attention to the ostensible message you don't in fact miss part of the message - as here: if you don't comprehend the significance of the frame, you fail to see the whole picture.

Abhaya: And now Kulamitra on the reason for - well, something about Avalokitesvara.

Kulamitra: Yes. In the lecture, when it comes out that it's Avalokitesvara teaching Sariputra as it were, you explain that though he's usually the Bodhisattva of Compassion, here he represents Perfect Wisdom; the two are in fact com... (inaudible) and that it

is out of Compassion that one teaches Wisdom to others. But it still seemed to me that, obviously, as an advanced Sambhogha-kaya Bodhisattva, any Bodhisattva would have all the various aspects of higher spiritual development. So is there any other reason why it should be Avalokitesvara rather than the more

obvious Manjushri?

S: One could, of course, say that on this particular occasion it was in fact Avalokitesvara who happened to address Sariputra. One could take it in that way. I can't think of any particular reason, other than that perhaps Avalokitesvara was such a very popular Bodhisattva that he played a prominent part even in those situations where perhaps his association with Compassion in particular didn't particularly qualify him to play a part. None the less, he is a Bodhisattva and, whatever aspect might be

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given prominence to, he is an Enlightened Being, a manifestation of the Sambhogakaya, so any Bodhisattva can do anything. You could even say that perhaps it's to remind us of this fact, so that we don't always expect to see Avalokitesvara where Compassion is the theme. It might have that kind of significance. Maybe it gives us a bit of a jolt, because since the theme is Wisdom perhaps we would have expected to see Manjushri, but we have Avalokitesvara. Then we ask why, and then we come to realise that, in a sense, it doesn't make any difference. I am sure one could find lots of reasons if one really searched the Scriptures and tradition

thoroughly. But I can't think of any others at this moment.

Surata: It wouldn't be anything to do with re-emphasising the importance of Compassion as a reaction to the Hinayana, which had been one-sidedly intellectual?

S: Possibly, it could be. Because you are emphasising Wisdom in the text itself, so perhaps you emphasise Compassion in the symbolism of the figures. That would be a possible explanation, yes.

Dharmapriya: Is this the only Prajnaparamita text where Avalokitesvara delivers the message, so to speak?

S: To the best of my recollection, yes. Very often it's the Buddha and a human interlocutor, isn't it, as in the Dea7Dnd Sutza? And of course there is a ~e2feetLon of Wtsdon where Manjushri does appear - it is the one in 700 lines, I think, isn't it?

Abhaya: The next question is from Satyaraja about chanting the sutra.

Safvnrsint Tn the lecture. vou mention chantina the Heart Sutra in Sanskrit

before meditation. Why did we go over to chanting it in the English translation? And do you think this is successful? And could you see a case for going back to the original Sanskrit?

S: I don't remember why that change was made. I think originally we chanted it in Sanskrit and English, usually. Perhaps people found the Sanskrit chanting difficult, or it didn't convey any immediate meaning, so we slipped into the English, perhaps after my own departure from London. I think it wouldn't be a bad idea if at least from time to time we did recite it in Sanskrit. The Sanskrit text is given in Roman characters in Conze's Buddhtst WLsdan books, so it's quite easily accessible. It hF~s heen +~na recorded.

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Kulamitra: As far as I know, the Kapleau English version that is used in his Zen monasteries in America is chanted in quite a different way;, much more like the chanting of the Sanskrit or Japanese, quite fast and rhythmic.

S: The Chinese and Japanese, I believe, do chant very fast. I have described that kind of chanting in one of my Lettets, haven't I? - which I heard in Penang. It was quite impressive. But, of course, it was very Chinese, and I don't know whether that would be suitable for us.

Abhaya: In the early days, Bhante, we did chant it in Japanese sometimes, do you remember?

S: Those who knew Japanese. I didn't. Someone Introduceu It



Abhaya: No, they distributed sheets and we all sat round and chanted it in Japanese.

S: I don't think I did, I don't remember. Ananda might have been quite keen on that, because he was into Zen at that time. I might have been there.

Susiddhi: I think you were there. It was in the Puja book.

S: Oh, that's true. But I think, though, Ananda just inserted that, because he produced the Puja book. I don't think I had anything to do with that. Ananda sometimes inserted Tibetan verses, too, but I think I'm not in favour, really, of having chanting in too many languages. I think the original Indian canonical languages plus English are quite enough. I don't think you really need to have something in Japanese and something in Tibetan, too. I don't really object to it, especially perhaps on festive occasions; but perhaps not too much emphasis need be placed on that. Normally, Pali and/or Sanskrit plus English - as I say, those being the original canonical languages. Ananda sometimes did do things a bit off his own bat in those

days.

Abhaya: The next question is from Prakasha on the use of ptainapazynita

mantras.

Prakasha: In the pzainapa2~nita practice, I have reflected on the two sun ata mantras I have also tried the verse at the end of Y the Bla70nd Sutza. There is also the Heart Sutra mantra and a number of other Perfection of Wisdom mantras. Are any of these mantras to be referred as means of access to the Perfection

p of Wisdom? Have you yourself reflected on any particular means in preference?

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S: I canZt say that I have any strong preference, certainly not at present. I think at one time I did have a strong preference for the 'Gate, gate, pa2agate'; I don't know that I have that now. But all these verses and mantras and dha2anis have their own value and effectiveness. It is almost a question of making one's own choice; it doesn't matter, really, which you recite so long as you do at least recite one of them. In the case of the 22ainapazanuta sadhana, in that particular context the mantra is not the 'gate, gate'; it's the 'C>n dh Skrn Dhlhw, isn't it? (Prakasha: 'Chn Ah Dhlh Airn'.) 'C>n Fh Dhlh Airn', yes. So that shouldn't be varied, as it were, if you do that particular sadhana. But for general chanting, general recitation, apart from any sadhana, you can certainly recite any of those mantras or verses. I must say I have always liked the verse in the Vaj2acchedLka Sut2a, the 3larond Sutza, about the similes - the bubble and the stream and the star and so on. There is somewhere, I can't remember where, a very good English verse translation of that, with rhymes as well. I think one finds it in old anthologies sometimes. That- can be used as a basis for systematic meditation, taking up each of those similes in turn. Conze explains their meaning, doesn't he, in his commentary? - the particular, the specific significance of each comparison, each simile. (I don't mean?) that is the form of alpassana practice.

Kuladeva: Bhante, do you think that the sadhana mantra would be more appropriate with the concluding mantras? Especially since we recite the 'gate, gate' in the context of the Heart Sutra.

S: There was a reason why I added the '@ate, gate': that being a sort of impersonal mantra, not the mantra of any particular deity but rather the mantra of Wisdom itself, as it were, impersonal Wisdom. Because not everybody might be attracted by a personal form or a Bodhisattva, but might prefer an impersonal approach, so to speak. So this is why that particular mantra was added there. And I think I had the idea also, because it was tied up with mantras which people are given at the time of ordination, I think I had the idea that some people might not like the as it were personal approach and might not care to have the mantra of a particular Bodhisattva. But I found actually that that was the case only to a very limited extent; there were only, I think, a couple of people in those early days who wanted the 'Uate, gate' mantra because they didn't want to meditate on or visualise a Bodhisattva form; they preferred an impersonal approach, as it were. But that isn't the case now. I think it is a very long time since anyone told me that they preferred the impersonal approach.

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Kulamitra: I didn't even know that that was a possible option there.

S chuckles.

Tejananda: What would one do if one just had that as one's practice?

S: Well, there are a number of things one could do, because one could recite the 'Gate, gate, pazagate', relating the particular 'gates' to the different levels of sunyata. One could do that. Or one could recite the Heart Sutra many hundreds of times, and that particular mantra thousands of times, and reflect on the meaning of the Heart Sutra itself in various ways, and on the meaning of the mantra. One could do that very easily. Or one could recite and reflect on the meaning of those verses from the D1a7Dnd sut2a. One could take almost any verse or passage from the Perfection of Wisdom literature and reflect upon that. Because if one didn't visualise a Buddha or Bodhisattva, one would call to mind phrases or verses or mantras which embodied the Perfection of Wisdom, and reflect upon their meaning.

That would be the procedure.

Abhaya: The next question is from Mahamati on the dramatic recitation of the Heart Sutra.

Mahamati: I was wondering whether it might be useful sometimes to find

a way of giving greater emphasis to the form of the Heart Sutra

- <because> the content comes across well, but not the form

- by some form of dramatisation.

S: Yes, one could, perhaps. One could experiment with that. One could, for instance, have everybody reciting the frame together, and a solo voice reciting what Avalokitesvara says to Sariputra.

Mahamati: Yes, it would mostly be either speaking or listening...

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S: By the way, there is a longer version, isn't there? - which has a more extensive framework, one could say; which sets the scene in a more traditional way. We recite the short one, which is the one that is normally recited. Perhaps one could experiment a little.

: We had the idea in our group, actually, Bhante, that as we sit in rows now, perhaps, one night, one half of the room could recite it to the other half and the other half just listen, and the next night the other way round.

S: Yes, that's a good idea, too. Well, one could only try and see how

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one feels - whether one feels left out or not, or whether one feels genuinely receptive.

Abhaya: Now Suvajra has a question on the distinction between the third and fourth great statements of Avalokitesvara.

Suvajra: I was wondering if the distinction between statements 3 and 4

have not been blurred a little. The essentials of what you say are obviously correct. but in statement 4 I wonder if you haven't included some material

which more properly belongs in statement 3.

S: Let's have a look. One might have expected a little overlapping, let's say. So which statements?

Suvajra: Statement 3 and statement 4. In statement 4 you say that - paraphrasing it slightly - there is no such thing as Buddhism. But you say that that includes, in addition to the Four Noble Truths, the five skandhas, the six sense organs, the 18 elements, and the 12 links. But aren't those ones from the five skandhas through to the 12 links properly the third stage?

S: That's true, there is overlapping. That statement 4 is much broader. I've sort of expanded statement 3, in a way, made it more general, more universal. And also in a way translated it into more ordinary terms

Suvajra: Expanded statement 4?

S: No, expanded statement 3. That 'In sunyata no dharmas exist' - well, that's not very intelligible to someone who doesn't know something about the Dharma, something about the Mahayana, the Perfection of Wisdom. So in a way, in statement 4, one translates that statement into more accessible language.

Suvajra: So in the text where do statement 3 and statement 4 really begin and end?

S: I'm not sure about that. Let's have a look. I'm not sure even whether I actually correlated

those statements with particular passages of text. I think probably I didn't. Perhaps what I was saying was that, in the course of the text, Avalokitesvara makes in effect such-and-such a number of points.

Suvajra: It does seem in the text itself that you can correlate various passages with various statements.

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S: For instance, I say under 4: 'With his second statement, Avalokitesvara disposed of philosophy; with this one, he disposes of religion, even Buddhism.' So I don't say that he disposed of philosophy with statement 3, but with statement 2; which suggests that there is some sort of link between statement 3 and statement 4 - that one is perhaps a broader or more general or universal version of the other. I think it is inevitable that there should be some overlapping, for obvious reasons.

Suvajra: It just seemed it would have been clearer if, when you said statement 4, you hadn't included the five skandhas and on up to the 12 links, because they had already been covered.

S: I think that I was just enumerating them by way of illustration, and of the sort of material, the sort of teachings, that were negated. Whereas in statement 3 I am dealing with the technical concept of dhaD7as, which represent the ultimate categories of the Abhidharma. So there I am being more technical. In statement 4 I think I am being more general. I think it's simply that.

I must say that the material all seems a very long time ago. In some ways it seems quite remote. I think I would probably present things rather differently now, in that sense. Not that I disagree in any way with anything that I've said; I would in principle still say that; but I think now I would probably put things a bit differently.

Suvajra: What sort of approach would you take nowadays?

S: I'm not sure. Wait and see if ever I got around to giving a talk! I think possibly I'd be less abstract. I think that would be the main difference, as far as I can tell.

Tejananda: Bhante, I just wondered whether you would ever consider doing a full-length seminar on the Heart Sutra. That's something you've never done. S: I don't know. In a way, I've gone off seminars in recent years, especially as they haven't all been transcribed yet, not to speak of edited! It's not impossible, but I've certainly no plans.

Abhaya: Virananda has a question on the five skandhas in the Heart Sutra.

Virananda: It consists of three linked questions which run one into the

other. You demonstrate that the form of the sutra represents a process of transformation, and that its content describes

or is this not necessary?

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from the five skandhas, through the Abhidharma dharmas, to the path, a path of regular steps? And, bearing in mind that most people nowadays need a regular steps path to Insight, should this be our approach to the Heart Sutra? Secondly: on the other hand, is it not possible that the Heart Sutra can be understood by the average Buddhist without having a considerable knowledge of the five skandhas and the Abhidharma?

9 dharmas? So, thirdly: should we be spending a lot more time studying and reflecting upon the five skandhas, if we want to end up being able to meditate deeply on the Heart Sutra,

S: All right, let's have those one by one.

Virananda: You demonstrate that the form of the sutra represents a process of transformation, and that its content describes this process in terms of a number of stages. Is this progress from the five skandhas, through the dharmas, to the path, a path of regular steps? And, bearing in mind that most people nowadays need a regular steps path to Insight, should this be our approach to the Heart Sutra?

S: It does represent a path of regular steps, but I wouldn't say that all the steps are necessarily there, in the sense that they are rather big steps. And perhaps it wouldn't be a bad idea to break those big steps down into a larger number of smaller steps. And yes, I think most people do need a path of regular steps, including a path of regular steps with respect to the understanding of this particular sutra. I think it would help people if they had a better and clearer understanding of what the five skandhas were, what is the dharmas concept, even a conceptual understanding of sunyata itself, and path itself; and then, having acquired that sort of understanding, which corresponds to the Sutra Mahapajna (?), to reflect, and ultimately to meditate, on the sutra as understood in that particular way.

But, having said that, I have come across instances where people have had some kind of immediate intuitive apprehension of the Heart Sutra, without knowledge of those technicalities. But I think, even where that was the case, a knowledge of the technicalities, a more systematic progressive step-by-step approach, or approach by way of the path of regular steps, would deepen and confirm that intuitive understanding.

Does that answer all the questions?

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Virananda: It leaves me slightly puzzled as to how what you see as big steps would be broken down into smaller ones.

S: Well, for instance, you don't even need to plunge into the five skandhas straight away. You could approach those by way of the division of the so-called person into nama and rupa. Do you see what I mean? And then you break down the nama into its four constituent parts, so to speak, and then you arrive at the five skandhas. And then you could go on to deal with the 12

dhatus and the 18 ayetanas(?) and from there approach the dhazmas. And you could approach the dhaznes also more systematically. You could distinguish between the asansEzta dhaznas and the s~nsEzta dhazmas, and then you could proceed to the Abhidharma-type classification of cLttas and cactasLkas. That would be a more step-by-step approach. And then you could come on to the Perfection of Wisdom and the different levels and degrees of sunyata. In this way you could break down those three steps or stages in to 10 or 12, and that might help you to achieve a more detailed and systematic approach.

Suvajra: In other words, you've got to recapitulate on Sariputra's progress?

S: In a way, yes; because, after all, perhaps it is not without significance

that it is Sariputra who is addressed. In a way, Avalokitesvara is negating Sariputra's understanding, but there's got to be something there to negate. Sariputra has made progress; he has reached a definite level of understanding, and perhaps he would not be able to make that leap into the Perfection of Wisdom except from that particular vantage point.° Avalokitesvara's statement doesn't represent the exploding of an error or the removal of a wrong understanding, but only the deepening of a rather limited understanding. If that limited understanding wasn't present to begin with, it couldn't be deepened. Not that some exceptional individuals might not make the leap right into the Perfection of Wisdom from the very beginning, but I think they are very rare. One mustn't assume that one belongs to that particular class oneself. So perhaps one has got to be Sariputra fully before one starts listening to Avalokitesvara. One could look at it like that.

Virananda: So are we to understand that Sariputra has sutza7ahapzaXna(?) and not limited bhauana nehapzaina?

5: Sariputra has bhauana nshapzaXna too. He has the Insight of an arahant, but from that particular Mahayana perspective the Insight, the pzaina,

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of an arahant is limited; it is merely ptaXna. Avalokitesvara represents pzainapazanLta, which goes beyond. Of course, I need hardly add that we are dealing here with the Sariputra of Mahayanistic myth, not with the Sariputra of history.

Kulamitra: I do understand that that is the Mahayana myth and they put

things in that way. But are we to understand - you know, we usually talk just in terms of Insight, don't we? And on the 'Bodhisattva Ideal' series you suggest that, if possible, we get away from the sort of - well, the Mahayana had to take a certain approach to its own past; and you suggest that if possible we put things in more plain terms. And I wasn't completely clear, actually, whether the suggestion was that pzainapazsnita represented Insight as opposed to a subtle mental understanding, or whether the suggestion was there that you could have a limited Insight and that pzaXnapaz~ntta was a deepening of that Insight.

S: This is what, taking the sutra at its face value, it does in fact represent. I mean the Mahayana does not say that Sariputra has no Insight at all, but it is the Insight of a Hinayana arahant, hence limited. And Avalokitesvara seeks to take him beyond. If, of course, one wants to drop that particular antithesis between the higher Mahayanistic and lower Hinayanistic

approaches to Wisdom, then I am afraid one has to drop the sutra completely, perhaps; because it's based, historically, on that very antithesis. The only way round that would be to represent Sariputra as representing a purely mental understanding of the Dharma; though one would still have to deal with the question why Avalokitesvara uses those particular categories. But if you regarded Sariputra as representing a purely mental understanding of the Dharma, you would be degrading him to an even greater extent than the Mahayana has already done.

Perhaps one can think, in a more general way, in terms of Sariputra representing that particular aspect of the mind which inevitably just takes things literally, and Avalokitesvara as representing that aspect of the mind which goes to the heart of things, which penetrates to the spirit. So Sariputra then, broadly speaking, represents the letter of the teaching, and Avalokitesvara the spirit of the teaching; the two being, one might say, inseparable, at least for purposes of communication. But you still have to explain the presence of those two Abhidharma categories.

Kulamitra: But presumably those Abhidharma categories, or at least the earlier or more basic of them, and the general sort of trend rather than

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perhaps the details, could be the letter which expressed the experience of someone who had penetrated to the reality of the matter; but the letter then becoming 'literalised' over a period of time.

S: But, of course, I mean, one could also on that basis present, if one wanted to write a new sutra, an Avalokitesvara taking the place of Sariputra, an Avalokitesvara who had taken the categories of the Mahayana literally, had adopted a literalistic attitude towards the sunyata teaching and would have to have the real meaning of it revealed to him by a higher being. Because there is no doubt that Mahayana Buddhists in, say, Tibet or Japan have taken the Mahayana literally, or literalistically, in very much the same way that the Hinayanists have taken the Theravada teachings. I mean this is something that I have become more and more aware of since coming back to this country. I was really surprised when I started encountering

Zen in the flesh; it was very different from the Zen that I had read about. Because I found some Zen people, let us say, no less narrow-minded, dogmatic, bigoted and literalistic than the Theravadins I had encountered in the East. And it seems to go back to Japanese Zen itself, in some cases. So literalism is not really limited to the Theravada. I think there is a tendency to it in all schools of Buddhism, because that is a tendency of the human mind itself. I come up against it all the time in the FWBO: people trying to take things too literally, or literalistically. But, fortunately, in the FWBO, that is recognised as a tendency and is corrected. Elsewhere, it often represents orthodoxy.

But it does seem that you can't get at the spirit, at least with one's ordinary mind, except via the letter, so you need to understand the letter first, and then ask what is the real meaning of the letter.

Kulamitra: But a serious practitioner who took up the letter of the Abhidharma as a basis for

achieving Insight - presumably initially they would be short of Insight, be just mulling it over - but if they actually broke through to Insight, would they not automatically see that those dhaunas were empty?

S: If it was real Insight, of course; because they would see that everything was empty. Why should dhaunas be excluded? Yes, indeed.

Kulamitra: So, despite the historical context, and that particular way which emerged of putting things, if someone held those Abhidharma categories literally, they couldn't be an arahant or a Stream-entrant or anything else?

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S: No. Of course, one has to be careful that, in studying the letter of a teaching, one doesn't adhere to it so rigidly that it ceases in practice to become a means for the development of Insight. This is what has happened, in many cases, in the Theravada world. I think it is less likely to happen in the case of the Mahayana Buddhist world, because there is a greater and more explicit awareness of the limitations of conceptual formulation. There is much less awareness of that limitation in Theravada Buddhist circles.

Abhaya: The next question is my own. It arises really out of the last answer.

In the course of the section on Avalokitesvara's six great

statements in your lecture, you have phrases such as: 'Reality is quite pure, bare of philosophy and concepts', and: 'Reality

rejects all our systems'.

S: Ha! It would be very easy to take that literalistically, wouldn't it? Look at this gross personification of Reality, conceived of as 'rejecting' something. How can Reality reject anything, or accept anything, for that matter? So clearly those statements have to be taken in their spirit.

Abhaya: It seems that in the history of Buddhism, scholasticism inevitably develops as reason tends to become dissociated, even alienated,

from Reality.

So I've got two questions, closely related. First, to what extent is the development of the rational faculty and

the building up of a knowledge of the theory of the Dharma necessary to the development of Insight? And, secondly: in the FWBO in recent years, much emphasis has been placed on the importance of study - for example, the Mitra study course. It is understandable that a minority of Order members so inclined

will pursue detailed courses of study. But I did wonder, this

morning, listening to your inspiring exposition of the Heart Sutra, what need is there for the



majority, say, of Mitras, to know all this much? Would it not be sufficient to know, say the difference between the two kinds of conditionality,

so as to be able to distinguish between skilful and unskilful and to know by heart one or two key formulations that might be used for the development of Insight?

S: I think this is broadly true. But one has to bear in mind that there

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are, say, dhammanusasatthas and saddhammasatthas - leaving aside the kayasakshas(?) for the moment; we don't usually talk about them. Do you remember what I said in The Three Jewels about the dhammanusasattha and the saddhammasattha?

Abhaya: Vaguely, yes.

S: Well, the dhammanusasattha is the person of a more intellectual approach, and the saddhammasattha is the person of a let's say devotional approach. But there is one great difference which I mentioned between the dhammanusasattha and the saddhammasattha, apart from the fact that one is as it were intellectual and the other devotional; do you remember what that was?

Mahamati: Is this to do with <the fact that> one is more attracted towards the Ideal and the other is actually fleeing from the pain of existence and that's what motivates us?

S: N-no, not quite. You've got a bit near it. The saddhammasattha is attracted by the Ideal, no doubt, and the dhammanusasattha is too. But in what particular form is the saddhammasattha attracted to the Ideal?

Suvajra: .... as a person.

S: As a person, yes; in particular, what sort of person?

personal, more exalted ....

S: Or a guru. So, in the case of the saddhammasattha, there is more devotion to the guru, more reliance on the guru. So the saddhammasattha needs, in a way, to understand less in an intellectual way because he is prepared to take the guru's word for it out of his devotion. In the case of the dhammanusasattha, if the guru says 'Just do this, do that,' he does it. He doesn't require much in the way of explanation. But in the case of the dhammanusasattha, he usually wants to know why, and one 'why' leads to another. And in the end you've got a whole system of philosophy. And he needs to understand and accept intellectually, perhaps, quite a lot before he can get started. Whereas the saddhammasattha can get started very quickly with minimal explanations. So, all right, if the majority of people in the FWBO are saddhammasatthas - it may be the case! - well, perhaps in their case they don't need to study very much, provided also that they have got a guru around, someone in whom they have great faith and trust, and whose word they can as it were accept and act upon. But to the extent that one is a dhammanusasattha,

one will need to have a better and fuller intellectual understanding, so that one can be convinced and, on the basis of that conviction

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tion, practise. In the FWBO I don't think there is such an extreme difference between saddhanusaztns and dhammenusattns as one sometimes finds, for instance, in the East. I think here a lot of people are quite inclined to be dha7anusatins. Perhaps they would like to be saddhanusaztns, some of them, but they tend to be dhar7anusazins, I think, on the whole.

There are some people whom I know I can ask just to do something and they'll do it. But others will want to know why, very often. Even in quite ordinary matters they want to know why, and you have to explain a lot to them. They can't even sometimes understand what you want them to do until you've explained why you want them to do it, and that might take quite a long time. But with others, with a few, you can say, 'Well, just go and do that, please,' and they go and do it. It doesn't occur to them to ask why you want it done and what would be the use of doing it. Some, in fact, when you start explaining, will start disagreeing with you and say that perhaps it would be better to do it in such-and-such way or maybe it isn't a very good idea; and then that takes up quite a lot of time. I am referring to more dharmic matters; because in practical matters they may well have a better knowledge of things than I do. But that's another matter.

Abhaya: But in terms of my first question - 'To what extent is the development of the rational faculty and the building of of a knowledge...necessary to the development of Insight?' I am still not quite clear about it.

S: I think you can have a minimum of rational understanding. You can have very little. I think if you have a reasonably clear, rational understanding of impermanence, that is probably the minimal basis. I think you could get by with that. But for most people that isn't enough. They've got that already. Even the ordinary non-Buddhist knows, in a way, that everything is impermanent, that he's not going to live for ever; but it is not a sufficient basis, that degree of understanding, for him to get embarked on a spiritual path. So he needs a lot more explanation and he needs to be convinced by all sorts of arguments - or perhaps his own bitter experience - before he can get started. But for someone who is really a saddhanusaztn and spiritually ripe, a very little intellectual understanding is sufficient to provide a basis for the development of Insight.

I mean, look at the case of Wei Lang, Hui Neng; that is a classic example, isn't it? He just happened to hear the Dta70nd Sutza being recited - or, I think, the Whtte Zotus Sutza. At once he attained a degree of

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Enlightenment. He was illiterate. He was probably a quite intelligent person, but certainly not having a systematic understanding of the doctrine.

Abhaya: So, in that case, what I am getting at, if that is the case, is why don't we try to sort out these types a bit more clearly rather than siphoning everyone through quite a lot of study - far more than a rational basis and a clear rational understanding of the import of impermanence?

S: There is also, of course, the point that we want to spread the Movement,

and for that one needs a medium of communication. And Ramakrishna said I have quoted this before; it is a quite illuminating saying - that if you want to commit suicide you can do it with a pin, but if you want to kill other people you need a whole armoury of weapons. So he said if you just want to develop yourself spiritually, a single mantra is enough, just recite it; but if you want to convince and convert others, you will need to know all the shastras.

Abhaya: But wouldn't this apply to the minority rather than the majority? Only about, at the most, say, 5 per cent. of the Mitras coming through will be spreading the Dharma in that way?

S: Well, I explained once to somebody, there's only two ways of spreading the Dharma. Well, he didn't want to have to do a lot of study. So I said, well, if you don't want to do a lot of study, fair enough; but if you want to spread the Dharma - and he did actually want to - there is only one other way: you must practise spiritually so intensively that you achieve a very definite degree of Enlightenment, and this is very noticeable and tangible, and people will be attracted by that and you can convert them, so to speak, just by sheer force of your personality, your more Enlightened personality. But if you don't do the one you must do the other. You can't just not study and then have to fall back on a very weak and imperfect intellectual understanding which will convince nobody, in fact will put people off the Dharma. You've got to have either the one or the other. Or probably, I think, in the case of most people, it's something of one and something of the other. But if you want to eschew the first, you've got to develop the other really well. There is no other way; no other way of spreading the Dharma.

But I think at present we are following a middle path, more or less, perhaps with a - perhaps we should have a bit more meditation and personal cultivation, a somewhat more scrupulous observance of Precepts, perhaps. But I think we must be reasonably well-informed about the Dharma; at least

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that. Despite the three-year study course, the level of Dharma knowledge in the Movement isn't really very high.

I certainly have thought, a bit reluctantly in a way, that little by little we will probably need to concentrate more and more upon our own distinctive formulations. They do seem practically more helpful to people. As you have mentioned, the 'Mind, Reactive and Creative' sort of approach, rather than the more traditional formulations. It does seem that people find our distinctively FWBO way of presenting things much more comprehensible, acceptable and practicable. And they are in any case along strictly traditional lines, or they represent developments and extensions of traditional Buddhist thought. They are not novelties, by any means. Sometimes they just represent clarifications and simplifications and fillings in or

resuscitation of lost or forgotten passages in the Scriptures which have been neglected for centuries. So we are not really innovating.

Is that reasonably clear?

Abhaya: Mm.

S: Perhaps also, if people want an alternative approach to a fair amount of study, they must develop more faith. Not faith in the sense of blind belief, of course, but faith in the true Buddhist sense. But one must be careful not to fall between two stools, so to speak.

Abhaya: Developing faith in the sense of doing more Puja and having more faith in the guru? Is that what you mean?

S: Yes, and more devotion to one's fellow disciples and so on, and fellow community members. Just a very much more emotionally positive attitude to everything; so positive that it really carries across. People have either got to be impressed by your understanding or they have got to be impressed by your affectionateness and kindness; one or the other, at least. The best is both. But if you can't, or don't want to, impress people by your understanding or your depth of knowledge, you've got to rely on your personality, your very positive, affirmative, attractive personality. Most people seem to rely more, perhaps wisely, on their knowledge! We have got a few people in the Order who have got obviously attractive personalities, and they do stand out, don't they? I mean, not so long ago someone came to stay in the retreat community, and everybody was just swarming around him, he was such a pleasant, attractive, likable personality. It was very noticeable. If you have got that sort of personality, you are really lucky. It makes life much easier. Whether you are in business  
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or whether you are in the spiritual field, or whatever - or politics - it makes life much, much easier if you're just attractive, a sort of fascinating personality. Of course, it has its dangers! I need not go into those!

Tejananda: Bhante, you're talking about two different sorts of attractive personality: one which is sort of naturally inborn and the other which is somebody who has developed Insight.

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S: Right. But if you have understanding and at the same time an attractive personality in the ordinary sense, well, the fact that you have that attractive personality will draw people to you, and then you can give them the benefit of your understanding. But if you haven't got that to fall back on, it has to be an attractive personality in the purely spiritual sense. Because then if you haven't got that, you may draw people to you by your general fascinating personality, but once they've been drawn you really haven't got anything to offer from a spiritual point of view. So either you must have genuine knowledge to offer them, genuine understanding, or a genuinely spiritual personality, once they've been drawn to you by your superficial attractiveness. Dharmapriya: The way you've described this person of very emotionally positive attitude, it's as if the person is inculcated on sort of radiant emotional positivity. Would that be also an alternative route to doing a lot of sitting sa7atha meditation, in terms of striving for Insight?

S: I think such a person would find meditation quite easy. They'd be happy, calm, naturally concentrated, yes. And, of course, that sort of attractive personality doesn't necessarily imply good looks or anything like that, because that kind of attractive personality can shine forth through any kind of features. But I think it helps to be good looking, anyway - and young. It does help. Abhaya: So that leaves us one question: Dharmapriya's, a double question, on recommendations.

Dharmapriya: It's a double question. Bhante, but the two parts are slightly

separate. The first one is merely: there seem to be several commentaries or books about the Heart Sutra - Dr. Conze's, Geshe Rabten's, Hui Neng's - no, sorry, Han Shan's (?) - and the most recent one by Geshe Gelsang Gyatso (?). Do you have any comment about any of them - any to be recommended or perhaps any to be scrupulously avoided?

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S: I don't know of any that is to be scrupulously avoided. Read them all if you can. If not, just make your own choice from perhaps a glance at the blurb. I must say I found Han Shan's very stimulating when I read it many years ago. Not that I am especially recommending that one. Conze is very useful, though perhaps not particularly inspiring; but useful and informative. It is clear. I haven't read this new one, but it looks quite interesting, just from a superficial glance. None of this material is very lengthy, so anyone who is interested in the serious study of the Heart Sutra could, I think, quite easily get through it all.

Dharmapriya: On the next study leaders' retreat we'll be studying the Sutra of Golden Light. Are there any commentaries, secondary literature, articles or anything, other than your lectures, that you can recommend or even point to?

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S: I don't know of any, I'm afraid. Some years ago, there was a translation in The Middle Way of some chapters that don't come in our version, I think from the Mongolian; and I think they had a short introduction. They are available in the Order Office, in the archives. One might look at those. Otherwise I don't know of anything else. It has been a very popular sutra in many parts of the Buddhist world, but it doesn't seem to have been made the subject of much study. I think it's been popular mainly in a sort of semi-magical way. I might even go so far as to say that its significance hasn't really been much understood until recently. The nucleus of it is undoubtedly the Chapter of confession, but the rest is also quite important.

Dharmapriya: So then the works by Johannes Nobel are more to be taken as philological works and commentaries rather than really spiritual works?

S: He has a translation into German which I believe is a very good piece of work. I'm afraid I have not read his introduction because it is in German, it's not translated. To the best of my knowledge, it is mainly textual. I do have a photostat copy of that German introduction which someone did once promise to translate for me. It wasn't Dharmapriya, it was somebody else I knew years and years ago. But they never did it. I could try to find that - well, I know I've got it somewhere. I'd find it in time for the next session, and those knowing German could just have a quick look at it and see whether there were any useful points in that introduction.

But in a sense the Sutta of Golden Light isn't a sutra in the ordinary sense. It is more than just a literary work. I have gone into that in  
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the lectures themselves, so I won't enlarge upon that. But we probably will have a very interesting time going through it; quite different, perhaps, from anything we have done before. I think when I first came into contact with it, the first time I read it, the translation, I was really quite astonished and quite impressed by it. I at once saw the bearing of it, which so far as I know no one had seen before. But again it is because

one asks Why? Why should this be included? Why should that be included? Why should these goddesses make their appearance? What is the significance of that? Is it merely that those goddesses agree to protect the sutra? Surely that can't be the whole meaning? But it seemed very obvious what it really was, what it was on a deeper level. It seems to make sense, especially when you bore in mind the particular character of those goddesses in Indian mythology. It seemed to link up with the significance of the spiritual life as a whole.

I think so many people, especially scholars, perhaps, just read sutras; they don't understand them at all. They don't even think there is anything to understand, in a way! They think when they have understood the words and the ideas in a very narrow, literal sort of way, that's that, they've understood. It's very disappointing, though perhaps one shouldn't be surprised.

But this just brings one to the more general point that those who are popularly regarded as being qualified are not in the least qualified. This is the result of the invasion of the spiritual world, one might say, by profane scholarship, which is totally unqualified to pronounce upon any of these matters. Dr. Johnson has a very illuminating vision in this respect - I think it's a vision, or it might be a dream; I think it appears in The Spectator or one of his papers. He describes how the scholars and the academics, as we would say, present themselves as the masters of thought and learning, but he says that they are really no better than the journeymen, they are really the carriers of bricks and the mixers of cement, things like that; and in his vision he sees them taken down quite a number of pegs and put in their proper places. But they are regarded, and they regard themselves, as the real authorities. I mean you're not an authority on Buddhism, I'm not an authority on Buddhism; they are the authorities. This is actually the attitude of many of them. How could we be so naive as to take these things literally and try to practise them? This was the attitude of some of the scholars who came to Kalimpong towards me; they regarded me as incredibly naive because I was taking Buddhism seriously and actually  
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trying to practise it. They thought this really absurd!

I think this is a very big job we have to do, sooner or later. It is ridiculous that when,

for instance, Order members want to study something academically, they have to go along to universities where sometimes they have to sit at the feet, so to speak, and learn about Buddhism from people who do not even believe in it, have a very limited understanding, but think they know all about it. They have to be replaced as quickly as possible, hopefully by Order members. It's really quite disgraceful, in a way. It shows how far astray we've gone from any kind of spiritual tradition of spiritual culture, or spiritually based civilisation.

Suvajra: Do you think it is going to be possible to replace them without undoing the structure of the rest of the universities?

S: Mm, I think there's something in that, too. I think one could probably displace a few, but I think in the long run one really needs to overhaul the system. Perhaps one would need to start one's own parallel institutions, which would be of good scholarly standard so that they couldn't be ignored or dismissed, but which at the same time would be informed by the spirit of Buddhism. This is going to take a long time, and I don't suppose I shall see it, but this is what we should do. In the East, you do have Buddhist universities and all that, so called, but they are usually run along Western academic lines; even though you may have bhikkhus teaching in them. But their attitude is basically Western academic. Not that scholarship as such is to be despised; it is a very useful instrument indeed, and some of the people I have mentioned, in their own way, have done very useful work; but it's work of which we can make good use but of which you cannot make really good use unless you have a deeper understanding of Buddhism. You can make a better use of their work, very often, than they can make of it themselves, a very much better use. What benefit did Max Muller get from the Heart Sutra, personally? But we can get quite a lot of benefit from his translation. It seems a pity, in a way - a pity from his point of view, or with regard to him. Kulamitra: I suppose, in a way, we ought to be quite grateful that those people exist, because in some ways - say, with textual analysis which enables you to place things historically and so on - it always sounds to me so painstaking. I imagine even a fairly intellectual practising Buddhist would probably think there was a better use for their time, in an immediate sort of way.

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S: Could be. Well, there's no harm in having the donkeys of literature, as it were, provided they know that they're donkeys! But they won't accept that they are only donkeys. In ancient India sometimes the bhikkhus and the pundits worked in close collaboration, and the pundits knew that they were only pundits - that they were masters of the letter, but that the monks were masters of the spirit of the text, and this was recognised. But not all the modern pundits have this sort of attitude. A few do; some are much more modest than others. Tucci was a very good example. He wasn't very modest as a man, but I think as a Buddhist, as a scholar, he was very modest, and he did have a very good feeling for the spirit of what he was writing about. And again, someone like Govinda. He was a scholarly person, not a first-rate scholar, but a scholarly person but with a very strong feeling for the Dharma; because he was a Buddhist, as Tucci was a Buddhist. There are not many, I think, who are not Buddhists who have a definite feeling for the Dharma as such.

: Perhaps Conze?

S: Oh, he was a Buddhist; he certainly considered himself a Buddhist. But in the case of the non-Buddhist scholars, something of the Dharma shines through in spite of them.

This is the sort of thing Subhuti and I were discussing recently the fact that newspapers can publish articles about, say, a Buddhist group, say about the FWBO or any other Buddhist group, spreading their quite uninformed and unenlightened views about it to millions of readers, and there is nothing that we can do about it; even if it's actually libellous there's really nothing in practice we can do about it, however grossly it misrepresents us. So what does this mean? We've got to have our own organs of communication - even our own newspapers, eventually - and reach as large a number of people, or be so powerful that they don't dare to treat us like that. It's really, if you think of it, quite shocking that we or any Buddhist group, or any spiritual group for that matter, could be actually libelled and slandered to millions of people without being able to do anything about it. That is actually the position at present in Britain, which is a democratic country. Perhaps it's one of the consequences of democracy. Perhaps it is one of the things that make one have little reservations about democracy as popularly understood.

Abhaya: The press wouldn't be any better, it would just be someone else other than the Journalist deciding whether or not you got a good press.

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S: I'm saying that the Order should perhaps have its own newspapers, eventually, which would be, hopefully, truthful and factual, as well as communicating authentically about ourselves. I would quite like to have a sort of journal of, say, comment on world affairs, from a Buddhist point of view. It would be very useful. But then you've got to have really properly trained and qualified people who don't only know their Buddhism thoroughly but know a lot of other things too, well-informed about a lot of other things, like economics - you know, dull, boring things like that. Some people enjoy these things.

: I found the articles in Golden Dz-n that do sort of reflect things in world affairs very interesting. It's an engaging kind of thing to have. That's been a very interesting

S: Right. We are developing that, cautiously. There are certain topics we have decided to avoid because they are so difficult and delicate - for instance, the fact that in Sri Lanka some Buddhist bhikkhus have been actually inciting the Sinhalese against the Tamils and even apparently, according to Ashvajit, inciting - well, encouraging - the army personnel to fight and kill the Tamils and in that way to 'defend' Buddhism. So I felt we shouldn't comment on those things; they are just too explosive. We need to be very sure of our facts, also. But you remember my comments on Walpola Rahula's The Re 2 L t age ot t he BuddhLs t MUnk .

And so there is quite a lot for us to do in all sorts of ways. So you can see the need for some people being wellinformed, not only about the Dharma but about other things, if we are to make any real impression on the society in which we live, and perhaps even a spiritual personality isn't enough! Though it's-helpful on the purely spiritual level, in contact with individuals directly.

Anyway, perhaps we'd better leave it there.

Voices: Thank you very much, Bhante.

S: And look forward to next time.