

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 [Mitrans](#). These seminars were highly formative for the FWBO/Tiratna as Sangharakshita opened up for the still very young community what it might mean to live a life in the Dharma.

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

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

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

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

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

Sangharakshita's Literary Executors and the Adhithana Dharma Team

DISCLAIMER

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

Men Study Leaders Seminar based on the Higher Evolution of Man Lecture Series

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Subhuti: I've got a list of questions organized under subjects and I'll just ask the speakers to read their questions. We're going to start with Kulamitra, who's got a question on the theory of the Higher Evolution as science.

Kulamitra: Is your view of evolution tied to scientific facts, and could it be an acceptable alternative to mechanist or vitalist theories as far as scientists are concerned?

S.: I did look through my original notes of this lecture this afternoon it did occur to me that that particular question did need, I wouldn't say, clarification, but perhaps in a way, enlargement - of placing within a wider context. In fact, I was thinking about this very question some weeks ago. What occurred to me was this: one has got on the one hand, the scientific theory for - some people insist on calling 'hypothesis' - evolution; that is a strictly scientific theory or hypothesis which relates mainly to the field of biology, but which has been extended or extrapolated to other spheres of knowledge - some scientific, some not so scientific. So one has got evolution as a scientific theory or hypothesis on the one hand, on the other, one has got the purely spiritual and especially the traditional Buddhist conception of a sort of hierarchy, a spiritual hierarchy - a hierarchy of levels of being and consciousness and especially a hierarchy of degrees or levels of spiritual attainment. Do you see what I mean? In the case of Buddhism, you've got the dhyanas: the rupa dhyanas, the arupa dhyanas and their respective corresponding lokas. You've also got the different stages of transcendental (lokas) as represented by stream entry, once returner, non-returner and so on. So in the second place, one has got that spiritual hierarchy of states and persons. Now the important point I want to make is this: the scientific hypothesis or facts - if one regards it as a fact - does not prove the spiritual fact. You see what I mean? This is a quite important point. Science does not prove religion, in other words. So the question arises, 'well, does religion prove science'? (Laughs) Well, not quite, because it isn't a matter in a sense of proof at all. Certainly not of scientific proof, so the point I wanted to make really clear or enlarged on, was that personally, I did not start from science and work my way to religion. I did not start with the concept of evolution and work my way to the conception of spiritual hierarchy, but the other way around. Do you see what I mean? In other words, I saw in the realm of biology and confirmed by the theory of or hypothesis of evolution, what I already saw and experienced to some extent, in the spiritual hierarchy according to Buddhism. So therefore, one might say that for me, the higher evolution was an already established fact and that seems to be reflected in, or as it were anticipated by, the whole process of the lower evolution. And it seems to make sense therefore, to regard them as being respectively in their different spheres, exemplifications of a single law or principle. But it is as though the lower derives from the higher and not vice versa.

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Whether this will satisfy the scientist is quite another matter; whether one should always be

concerned to satisfy the scientist, as scientist, is quite another matter. Is science the supreme criterion? Is it the yardstick, so to speak? So that was what I was thinking a little while ago. But I was also following it up because this leads to what is in a way, a broader issue. And in a way this is the issue of knowledge as such. Does knowledge derive, so to speak, solely from sense experience? Scientific knowledge of course, does. The knowledge which one has, say, of things like spiritual hierarchies, doesn't derive from the senses. It derives from some other source. So one has got, as it were, two kinds of knowledge: one has got knowledge which derives from the senses and knowledge which does not derive from the senses. I'm using the word 'knowledge' in a quite provisional sort of a way. So when one looks even at the senses, and the knowledge which derives from the senses, one is looking at the senses and looking at that knowledge derived from the senses in the light of a knowledge that does not derive from the senses. In other words, the knowledge that one derives from the senses or the knowledge that is derived from the senses, fits into or is part of a much larger pattern - that is to say, a pattern of a knowledge that is not derived from the senses. Do you see what I mean? One could call of course, this knowledge that does not derive from the senses, archetypal knowledge or you can call it 'imagination'. So that it's not a question of justifying, say, imagination in terms of sense-derived knowledge, but rather of understanding the sense-derived knowledge itself, in terms of or by means of, the knowledge not derived from the senses; that is to say, the imagination. In fact you cannot but do that, because in as much as you have an imagination, even though it may not be very consciously operative, you are all the time observing even knowledge derived from the senses, in the light of a knowledge which is not derived from the senses. So you can see how this ties up with our question of science and religion, lower evolution and higher evolution. See what I mean?

I think it's very important perhaps to try to get this, otherwise a comparatively unsophisticated person, already impressed by the great prestige of science, would think that we're trying to say - or we're maintaining that - the scientific theory or hypothesis of evolution proves or tends to prove, the truth of Buddhism. But actually it is simply that it illustrates within its sphere a more general proof of which we're already convinced, within the wider sphere of the spiritual life especially the spiritual hierarchy. To put it maybe paradoxically, you find it possible to believe in men because you believe in angels. (Chuckles)

G. K. Chesterson says in a little essay I was reading the other day, that it's because men no longer believe in the gods that they find it difficult to believe in man himself. Anyway, I've expressed it all very sort of broadly, very sort of approximately, but I hope what I'm trying to get at, as it were, communicated - it does require a much more refined and detailed and comprehensive expression, but I thought I'd better try and get this point across, however inadequately. (Pause)

Subhuti: Sagaramati has a question on the subject of mechanism.

Saramati: I've got another question - they're not real questions; they're more like . . . (inaudible) You say that the mechanistic view of evolution says that nothing new comes into existence. They're the same elements in a more complex pattern. Surely this isn't a mechanistic view but a reductionist view. A mechanistic view does allow - the modern mechanistic view does allow new qualities to come into existence, but says that such qualities can

be explained without reference to any unobservable force at work behind what is observed. Evolution can be fully accounted for by the interplay of genetic mutations and natural selection; nothing else is needed. So new qualities in different species do come into being but without any purpose.

S.: I think it comes from the same thing. I think the word 'new' is being used in two different senses.

Sa aramati: Under the title of a book the other day, it said that mechanistic view is not the view of a machine. The mechanistic view is one that says that - well, it takes into consideration causality: that things don't come into being without a cause. And this was in a book on philosophy of science. This point said that the mechanistic view is like a machine. They're saying 'No, it's not like that'. It's just that they don't look for any cause that they can't actually observe. And some people say that evolution can be explained purely in terms of what they observe without calling on any other cause.

S.: I must say, I don't really see any difference between the two views. I certainly accept the term 'reductionist' - perhaps that is even a more appropriate term, because if one uses the term 'mechanistic', well one might have a vision of something like a motorcar whereas one is concerned actually with much more complex phenomena. But even when dealing with more complex phenomena or more, as it were, complex development one does still not want to adopt a reductionist position. So perhaps it would be advisable to substitute reductionist for mechanistic, even though I don't see any difference between the two in principle. Because to go back to the question of 'new'. 'New' as a quality is 'new' within a particular context. Something can be 'new' within a particular context which is not absolutely new. So even when one is speaking of the emergence of new qualities, one means 'new' for that particular level of existence. One doesn't necessarily mean new in the sense of never having previously existed anywhere before in any sense.

Sa aramati: A mechanistic view would say that it doesn't exist anywhere in any sense prior to the introduction of an attribute. Is that right?

S.: No. It would say that even now it is not really anything new. But there is no such thing as new. In fact if I wanted to press it to the point of absurdity, there is nothing new and nothing old either. There is just one same thing. This was neither new nor old in different aspects of transformation. (Laughter) It could be water or it could be fire as in Greek philosophy or it could be something more sophisticated - it could be matter, whatever 'matter' happened to be.

Sa aramati: They would accept the fact that consciousness is a new phenomenon and they would recognize that it does exist.

S.: But then again, it depends on what one means by new. One could have a 'new' combination and it's new as a combination but if one speaks in terms of combination one is really using the language of reductionism.

Sagaramati: In this view, they are trying to get away from reductionism. They may say that there's a certain sort of evolution on the inorganic level. But then they say, something happens. They don't know what, but suddenly there's a leap and you've got a new thing

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called life and then life evolves and suddenly there's something new comes into being called 'consciousness'. But the acceptable is called 'punctuated equilibrium' and this is how evolution works.

S.: Ah...the word 'equilibrium' to me is quite suspicious because it suggests stasis, you see. No real overall change.

Sagaramati: They say there's no real overall change on a certain... on an inorganic level. That more complex molecular structures are really the same as lesser ones but at a certain point, something new happens; something that can't be explained in terms i.e. it's anti-reductionist because you can't explain 'consciousness' in terms of biological - you can't explain biological in terms of the inorganic. They do say, there's something completely new comes into being.

S.: Well that's fair enough. (Laughter) So they seem to be coming closer to our position. So how does that arise then? They're not using the word 'mechanistic'.

Sagaramati: That would still come under a mechanistic view, because the other one, it seems to be saying would be called a reductionist view. So they're saying there is a real distinction between a reductionist view and a mechanistic view. They still haven't given up their mechanistic view, but they're saying that - well, they're coming more into line with us, in a way. And they will say that there could be a further evolution.

S.: I'm not clear about the point at which you felt a divergence from what I'd been saying in the lecture?

Sagaramati: Well you seem to be saying there's nothing new comes into being on the mechanistic level...

S.: Ah I dealt with it by saying it depends on what you mean by 'new' because one can even speak in terms of a new combination, so to use that language is reductionist. So it does seem that even those who don't necessarily accept a spiritual philosophy of life are not necessarily committed to a reductionist or mechanistic view. So to the extent that they're not committed or not necessarily committed to that reductionist or mechanistic view, they are beginning to approach or approximate to the more spiritual, so to speak, position which is represented by us. That is quite interesting and significant. So perhaps all that we're really saying is that in talking about mechanistic beliefs in this way I'm perhaps flogging a dead horse. So perhaps

one should make it clear that well, this is a view that was popular once upon a time but which is now not really accepted even by scientists. But clearly they don't go so far as to posit any sort of 'vital force', which is fair enough because I'm not too happy with that concept myself. In a way it is a sort of stop-gap type of explanation - just a sort of way of recognizing that some non-material factor seems to be involved.

Subhuti: But your principle objection to the mechanistic view was that it didn't explain the production of new qualities?

S.: Not so much that it didn't explain the production of new qualities but in principle it didn't even recognize the emergence of new qualities. It didn't recognize as 'new' qualities

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that we would call. There were some very extreme statements of that point of view in the last century and even at the beginning of this. 'The brain secretes thoughts like the liver secretes bile'-something like that. So clearly here, thought is not recognized -as anything new, any more than bile is recognized as something new. It's just a transformation. So this is sort of 'reductionism' with a vengeance.

Subhuti: But if there is such a qualified mechanism as Sagaramati suggested...

S.: Qualified mechanism - would one call it the 'qualified mechanism'? Or use some other term . non-vitalistic', t'non~re~ductionism~~~

Sagaramati Well it's a form of materialism...

S.: It's not materialism but it's not idealism either.

Subhuti: But it's explaining the production of these qualities sd~y in terms of pre~existing conditions. It's non-vitalist, isn't it?

Sagaramati: It's saying something magical happens but they don't now w at.

S.: Wow! This seems like magic!! (Laughter) Fair enough.

Subhuti: Well, it's just non-vitalist, non-reductionist agnosticism...

S.: No, it's not agnosticism because they seem to believe in magic. (Laughter) Well, they say belief in magic is the first stage towards religious and Spiritual life. (Laughter) Here again we come back to the question;;I think there's a contradiction in terms in saying that something new emerges but it is still as it were, given by what has preceded?'

Shagarama~ti Well I thought this was interesting because it's a way that maybe we can understand how you often say 'the mundane' and 'the transcendental'. When you say that you can't reduce the arising of the transcendental to the fact that there's any condition, all you can say is that something happens - what I thought is that 'maybe that principle exists on different levels'.

S.: Well, one could say in dependence upon A, B arises. In dependence on the inorganic, the organic arises. So in a way, the older traditional Buddhist formulation gets around that. Doesn't it? It is neither in terms of Indian philosophy - what do we call it? - Satkaryavada or Asatkaryavada: It asserts neither the identity of cause and effect nor their difference. But of course, that's not completely satisfactory from a philosophical point of view. But what it seems is that in explaining the content of this, one must be careful not to assume the existence of a crude materialistic, mechanistic view such as probably hardly anybody now actually holds. Otherwise a scientist might very well say, 'that misrepresents our view' It's probably that sort of view has probably now got only an historical interest. Because even the Marxists do not believe in mechanistic materialism but what they call 'dialectical materialism' I think one has to be very careful that if someone admits that something new has emerged, they should sort of be pressed to follow up the full consequences of that admission. New means new, in other words.

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But perhaps they don't immediately try to posit some metaphysical explanation or metaphysical source, but so long as they recognize that something new has emerged and don't retract that in any way, well that is the main point. I mean, explanations are another matter.

Sagaramati: I think those scientists, they would say how they personally see that happening is their personal beliefs. But what they observe in their results - this is what they observe. They keep the two separate.

S.: Well, then one might say, it comes back to what I said about the two kinds of knowledge. You can't really exclude your, as it were, 'religious' knowledge from your consideration of your scientific knowledge. You won't get an explanation philosophically, by observing facts. A philosophical explanation comes from some other source. So at least they are not looking for explanations where explanations are not to be found.

Subhuti: Following up the theme of new qualities: Kulamitra.

Kulamitra: I wondered if there is an alternative way of speaking of new qualities that emerge from absolute reality and manifest through evolution which is the name that we are using in the lecture. I mean, we thinking in terms maybe of a language of more of potential. And I further wondered whether the language you used in the lecture should be taken as a literal explanation or a poetic metaphor?

S.: Well, this raises the whole question as to how - what one might refer to as - higher knowledge is communicated? I think probably, it would be safer to say that it is communicated principally through metaphorical means and even language which we have come to regard as literal, when analyzed, is in fact found to be metaphorical. Even when we say, 'it comes from' - well that suggests it occupies space or that the process occupies space which in fact, of course, it doesn't. So really all metaphysical language, I think - and we did go into this a bit in Tuscany last year - is really metaphorical. I think we should be aware of this and admit it and use that metaphorical language in - the knowledge that--'tis

metaphorical and also not try to analyze it and object to it as though it was not metaphorical, but try to grasp or to sense or intuit what it is actually trying to communicate. But again, as I looked through my notes, I couldn't help feeling that as it is put there, it is perhaps an expression somewhat unsophisticated, not to say, 'crude'. If I was sort of writing out the whole thing in book form, I wouldn't put it quite like that. Perhaps I presented it in a slightly more sophisticated way even in the lecture, in my notes, it is in a quite crude sort of form. I know what I mean, but one must be quite sure that the other person knows what you mean too. For instance, if you take the example of the 'awakening of faith' - that text attributed to Asvaghosa - it speaks of a 'mutual perfuming' of what we would call the 'conditioned' and the 'unconditioned'. Well, clearly that 'perfuming' is a highly metaphorical expression, so you can't subject it to logical analysis. You can only just try to feel, to speak, try to intuit what it is trying to convey. I know this is from some points of view, is not very satisfactory. I think it's really the only way in which we can deal with those areas of experience, or that type of knowledge. Poetry is nearer to the truth than prose - truth in an ultimate sense that is.

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Subhuti: I think we can pursue this line a little further. Padmavajra has got a question on the language of absolute reality.

Padmavajra: You don't mention 'conditionality' in your lecture. Would the idea of progressive conditionality as expounded in 'the Bodhisattva: Evolution and Self-Transcendence', be more suited to the subject of evolution rather than the idea of an Absolute Mind making evolution possible, from which life continually draws and manifests to greater and greater degrees?

S.: In a way, that would be to anticipate, because I believe there was a lecture on Buddhism as the Path of the Higher Evolution and I think in this particular lecture, I am concerned just to speak in ordinary general and as it were, philosophical terms. I've postponed the consideration of Higher Evolution in distinctively Buddhist terms to that later lecture. But I will say something that fits in here, because I have in mind to say, just in case I don't get an opportunity later on, - I was thinking about this partly in connection with a criticism that appeared in a review of Subhuti's book, that is to say 'Buddhism for Today'. Subhuti's had a blast of quite interesting criticisms, but he was criticized by this particular review among other things for not talking sufficiently in terms of 'anatta' - instead of that, going on all about evolution and development and so on. So I felt this was rather obtuse in the reviewer - but I think it is important that you should all understand why, because you may have to meet this sort of objection. We talk in terms of 'evolution'; we talk in terms of 'development'; we talk in terms of the 'higher evolution'. So this is not any different really from talking in terms of 'anatta'. Do you see this point? Because for change to be possible, for development to be possible, for real development, radical development to be possible, there can be no 'tuncan in self' which is the whole point of 'anatta'. So to say that you believe in development - development of the individual; to say that you believe in the higher evolution is tantamount to an affirmation of the principle of 'anatta', except that you're affirming it in a more dynamic way and more in terms of life and experience and not in an abstract, as it were, static way. Some reviewers seem unable to appreciate that point. And as I pointed out to Subhuti, I dealt with this in an article - this very point - an article

published in 194? something, called the (Rapidly?) of Progress. (Chuckles) I also wrote another article which replies to criticisms to my article 'which had been bought by a Hindu philosopher, a Vedantic philosopher. So the matter has been well thrashed out by me within the FWBO from an early date, one might say. So in a way the Buddhist point of view is implicit in this language, the language of development. So in a sense, it's not really necessary to bring it in explicitly at this point. Do you see what I mean? If I was writing out the whole thing in book form, I probably would, because I'd have very much more space and I could at least put a footnote or refer the reader to chapter so and so. But there's no question of 'why does one put it in terms of -development instead of talking about 'anatta'? - as though one had forgotten all about 'anatta' or left it out or didn't believe in it - this is really quite ridiculous. So therefore, one may so, to speak in terms of development of the individual, to speak in terms of the higher evolution, is actually to speak in terms of 'anatta'. But not in a static way: 'There is no self!' - as though where there was supposed to be a self, there was a great big empty hole appeared, well that's not really what the Buddha was getting at, at all! I mean, one might even say that the doctrine of 'anatta' follows from the fact that radical change, radical development and progress is possible! Simply to hold to a static doctrine of 'anatta' is not really enough and maybe misses the spirit of the whole thing. So it's not that in speaking in terms of development and evolution, we

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have somehow gone off the rails - we've departed from traditional Buddhism. That is a complete misunderstanding based really on a failure to understand what 'anatta' is really all about. (Pause)

Subhuti: Tejananda has a question on Absolute Reality. If some of the questions have already been answered, don't ask them if you feel that you've already been satisfied.

Tejananda: You speak of a 'non-dual Absolute Reality' above and beyond the evolutionary process. There are two things in relation to this: A. if it is non-dual, how can it be known as 'above' or 'beyond'? and B. Is this way of speaking not liable to give rise to a wrong view of an Absolute or monad existing apart from phenomena?

S.: I would say that one cannot avoid using the language of duality, if one speaks not only of life but of spiritual life itself. The mere fact that you speak in terms of a goal to be attained, means that you're using a language of duality. Even if you say, you shouldn't think of a goal to be attained, well that's still the language of duality, because it envisages two possibilities - thinking of a goal to be attained and not thinking of a goal to be attained and what you should do is to follow the second alternative, which is again dualistic. Another gentleman took Subhuti to task for not being sufficiently 'non-dualistic' (Laughs) in his book. It seemed quite absurd because I'm bound to be non-dualistic, whether in a book or anywhere else (Laughs) Asserting cannot be non-dualistic in expression or thought. Maybe there is in some paradoxical way, some non-dualistic something or other somewhere, but if there is, it cannot possibly be put into any form of words or into any form of thought so one might as well not try. So one cannot in that sense say that there is an Absolute Reality, as Tejananda pointed out. If one says there is an Absolute Reality, well if it is, as distinct from not being

n-o7is, well it can't be absolute. If it is really Absolute, it can~ ~ either existing or non-existing or both or neither. So what can you say about it? I think actually the idea of Absolute Reality, when the term isn't being used in an obviously poetic sense, it probably better be dropped. Perhaps it's better to speak of the 'Undconditioned' or the 'Uncompounded' because you clearly here admit a duality between the Conditioned and the Unconditioned, the Compounded and the Uncompounded, 'samskrta' or 'asamskrta', so you can't be faulted there. But 'absolute' is a tricky term. Perhaps I shouldn't have used it. Because one speaks of the 'Absolute' but the absolute is complementary to the relative, so how can something be~Thute if it's complementary to Something else?! Hegel was rather fond of the term 'The Absolute'. There's a poem by Belloc about 'lordly dons' in Oxford or somewhere who 'ball the absolute about the hall'. (Laughter) Well we mustn't do that sort of thing. It's out of date. (Laughter) I don't think there are many more 'lordly dons' left anywhere, even in Oxford. I think he was referring to Bradley and his disciples.

Subhuti: So were you suggesting that one could substitute other terms for 'absolute' or is it that the whole framework in a sense is...

S.: I would say speak in terms of the 'unconditioned' or even the 'transcendental', because that is frankly dualistic, or speak more concretely of a 'higher world' - influences percolating down into lower worlds from higher worlds or from higher levels of -existence into lower levels of existence. That is frankly metaphorical.

Padmavara: Is that the same thing as saying, which you said in your lecture that 'absolute reality makes evolution possible', and that evolution is always trying to manifest absolute reality to greater and

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greater degrees' - is that the same thing as saying...?

S.: It's metaphorical language. You might just as well, perhaps speak in terms of maybe the dew falling from heavens and nourishing the earth, (Laughter) except that there, there's no real qualitative difference in as much as both are material phenomena but that's sort of looking at it scientifically, but poetically, one is higher, as it were, than the other. So perhaps it's a mistake - I mean, this just occurs to me in passing - that a lot of philosophy is an attempt to present in scientific or pseudo-scientific terms what cannot be so presented - that which can only be presented if it can~e presented at all - in as it were, poetic or metaphorical terms or in terms of symbols. This is one of the reasons - going off at a tangent - where I think it was a disastrous day for Christianity, when they started interpreting or explaining their symbols - very beautiful symbols in some cases, in terms of historic events. I heard an example of this on the radio the other morning - there was a discussion of the Virgin Birth: 'Was the Virgin Birth a historical fact?' An evangelical theologian maintained that it was. He further maintained that St~ Luke, the author of St. Luke's Gospel according to him - I thought that was sort of thinly doubted nowadays, anyway, - that Luke according to him, had spent two years in Palestine and had actually interviewed the virgin Mary and had no doubt questioned her personally about the matter (Laughter) and therefore there was historical

evidence for the Virgin Birth! (Laughter) So if you accept it as a poetic symbol in the deepest sense, well, it is universally meaningful; but if you insist on the Virgin Birth or the virginity of Mary as a historical fact in the physiological cum medical not to say, gynecological sense (Laughter), you get involved in all sorts of silly and rather embarrassing arguments. (Loud Laughter) They didn't even in those days know what conception meant, so could they really know what virginity meant in a strict sense?

Sa aramati: What is the point of philosophy of it? (S.: Indeed!) Watis t e point? (Loud Laughter))

S.: Why not just have poetry and mysticism and maybe a touch of science! Indeed, that is a very good question! What is the point of philosophy? That is to say, such philosophy as we have known in the West since medieval times - that is a very good point! Have we not divorced something which should not have been divorced? Have we not separated an element which should have been allowed to remain an integral part of some larger whole?

Sagaramati: Well the whole thing about poetry is that it becomes rather indiscriminate - it's far too easy to mix metaphors and for everybody to say, 'well, it's all One, really!' You can all agree there's a higher reality and we all agree it's this and that, so what's the difference?!

S.: In my experience, people are remarkably insensitive to metaphors. For instance, they're not even aware of the metaphorical nature of their own language or their own questions. They ask sometimes, what is essentially a metaphorical question, but expect a literal sort of reply which means they've taken the metaphorical element in their question, quite literally. In other words, they don't know that it's metaphorical. So I would say that people are not as metaphorical or poetical as perhaps you suppose. It's not so easy to be metaphorical.

Sagaramati: That's what I meant - isn't that a danger then? As far as I can see, the good thing, say, about philosophy is that it tends

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to be clearer.

S.: Well, that went to say, that critical philosophy has a function, enabling one to distinguish between a genuinely metaphorical statement and a genuinely factual statement, and on the other hand, a pseudo-factual statement - that is to say, a statement which is essentially metaphorical, masquerading as a statement of fact, in the scientific sense, which is what a lot of so-called philosophy is. But then that sort of awareness is certainly present within the traditional spiritual disciplines. I mean, Buddhism for instance, is well-aware of

this sort of

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S.: It says, as though in the West at one time, belief, blind belief makes such sort of heavy demands on the human consciousness, that reason sort of split off and went its own way in sheer protest. (Pause)

Subhuti: Kulamitra, you've got another one on Absolute Reality?

Kulamitra: No, I've got another one, but it's not on Absolute Reality, it's the one on the new qualities ... My question is: At what points in the evolutionary process, do distinctively new qualities emerge? How do they do so? And where do they come from?

S.: At what point? (Kulamitra: Or what points (plural)?) Are you tW~inking in terms of the triangle of evolution?

Kulamitra: I suppose I'm thinking of things like Sagaramati was talking about: life, consciousness, self-consciousness, transcendental consciousness....

S.: If one asks at which point - that assumes that there is a point. Well there may be, but whether that point is discernible, is the matter. Do you see what I mean? For instance, I was talking in Tuscany. I think it was in connection with such questions as: what is the exact point of stream-entry? And I said I thought one couldn't actually see the exact point of stream-entry, just because it was a point. For instance, you may have a balance but you can't, as it were, see with the naked eye, that it is actually absolutely horizontal but you know that it is horizontal within, as it were, a certain band. So I think it's not so much a question of at which point a quality emerges? because I think that would be very difficult to identify, but just a broad band as it were, within which it emerges. You can be sure that it emerges somewhere, within that band. But I doubt very much if you can pin it down in a recognizable way - to a particular point, even though in a sense, perhaps, there must be a point. (Pause)
So what was the next part of the question?

Kulamitra: Well in the tape you actually did talk about some form of new qualities. Could you say, in what broad band they emerge?

S.: Haven't I gone into that when speaking in terms of the triangle of the higher evolution?

Kulamitra: There's nothing in there, in a way, about how they do that and you suggested that something's come from the Absolute, but it seemed quite a general statement.

S.: Yes. So then the question arises: what does one mean by how? I put it in these sort of general terms. It's as though a base is gradually built up. That base becomes, as it were, more and more

subtle and more and more refined. And when it reaches a certain point, which we already said, to be not quite exactly recognizable as a point, it then becomes possible for some other element, some- thing else, so to speak - you can call it Absolute Reality, if you like - to start manifesting through that to a higher degree or to a further extent. So one might say, that the emergence - looking at it in this way - of those higher qualities comes about by way of the gradual refinement of the particular vehicle or medium through which a higher level of Reality, a higher dimension manifests. In other words, if one wants to develop it within oneself a higher quality or a higher level of consciousness, you refine and refine the existing level to the point where it can then become a medium for the next higher level, the next highest quality. That would seem to be the general way in which the whole process operates, at least it would seem to be a way of putting it.

Kulamitra: You couldn't give an example of that could you, in fact?

S.: Well, one has in fact, experiences in connection with meditation. It's as though you don't sort of try to aim at, let's say, third dhyana - you work on the intensification of say, second dhyana, - assuming you've gotten as far as that - you dwell upon it, you intensify it, you deepen it and that, as it were, provides you with the basis for, so to speak, the manifestation of the third dhyana. (Pause) I'm sure one could think of a sort of a physical illustration, but I can't think of one at the moment.

Voice: Friction, producing fire.

S.: Yes, yes.

Subhuti: Franklin's experiments to collect lightning - you fly a kite and the lightning strikes the kite. If you haven't flown the kite, you won't have collected the lightning, as it were.

S.: Yes. So it seems as though you have to create a basis for the manifestation of the next highest Reality in order. That is at least one way of putting it - again probably the language is metaphorical.

Kulamitra: In terms of where they come from, could you speak in terms of the next higher level, coming from within you or from without you, both equally valid?

S.: Well, I think even as I said, even the language 'you're coming from' is metaphorical... it doesn't matter very much whether you speak of them as coming from within or coming from without - the language is still metaphorical and you're still trying to explain whether in subjective or objective terms, the same kind of process, the same kind of process of development, or manifestation or emergence of higher qualities. But again, we can, - we can by-pass the whole issue and go back to the original formula: in dependence upon A, B arises.

But if that seems a little, as it were, bleak or bare, one can sort of fill it up with, so to speak, more poetic expressions which convey something of the actual feeling of what happens. Because if we say, in dependence on something, faith arises or dependence upon

faith, joy - it's not just some cold., as it were, mechanical process. So perhaps you can convey the nature of what happens in a more successful way if one invokes the aid of metaphors.

Subhuti: But on the level of fact, the most you can say is in dependence on A, B arises?

S.: Yes, yes. That is, one might say, a scientific description.

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A description in, as it were, scientific language - it doesn't go beyond the facts. There's no interpretation, but no doubt to satisfy other aspects of one's mind or one's being, some explanation is called for at some point.

Sagaramati: Do you think these views expressed by David Bohm, do you think they fit into this way of looking at things?

S.: I rather doubt it! In a way, it seems a bit reductive - his views seems reductionist, in way. The explication of something which was previously implicated - a sort of unrolling, if one takes it very literally.

Sagaramati: Isn't he, himself, being metaphorical?

S.: Well, he's not speaking as a scientist, so we have to ask, "is he speaking as a scientist or not?", because scientists are not supposed to use metaphorical language, except to explain scientific points, or just to make clear something which can be demonstrated in another way.

Sagaramati: Don't you agree that the only way you can explain those things is through maths - through mathematics - because in maths. you can work in dimensions that it's impossible for us to imagine, so he's sort of trying to explain what he does mathematically, in terms of our imagination. Isn't that what he's doing?

S.: I think one would need to go into the nature of mathematics or the nature of these mathematical entities - can one call them? - which can't be expressed in non-mathematical (words?).

Sagaramati: People live and work mathematically in something like six dimensions! - you could actually mathematically work in six dimensions! but you can't....

S.: I would like to ask, but what does one mean by that? And what does one mean by working? even.

Sagaramati: Well things happen on a certain kind of level that cannot be explained in terms of three dimensional (S.: Comments cover up rest of sentence: Oh yes, that's good enough!)...but they can actually be predicted by using this mathematical language, which goes

beyond, according to them, the three-dimensional reality and therefore. ...

S.: (Interrupting) Sometimes, one can predict from a basis of ~e experience without any mathematics, at all (Laughter).

Sa aramati: That's because it's a microcosm of reality - it's pre-icta le, they say, on a Samatha level (words unclear)

S.: Hm. Hm. Yes. Anyway, how did that question arise?

Sagaramati: Well, you seem to be saying that in dependence upon Dukkha, arises, Sradha. Couldn't you talk in the other sense of Sradha unfolding when the conditions arise?

S.: You could. I would regard that as metaphorical language, though expressing a deeper reality than that more scientific formula. Yes, yes.

Sagaramati But that scientific language is alright as long as we realize that it is metaphorical.

S.: No, the scientific language is not metaphorical: in dependence upon A,

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B arises. There's no metaphor about that. This is the traditional language of early Buddhism, as far as one knows - or one of the languages, let us say - because one can have doubts about whether it's the originally original language. But if one wanted, say, in a discussion group to avoid getting into complicated discussions about philosophy with half-baked people who don't really know what philosophy is, one can just insist that that is all that Buddhism says, all that Buddhism claims: that as a matter of practical experience, in dependence on A, B arises - for practical purposes, for purposes of actually living the spiritual life, you need not go beyond that! So sometimes it's useful in a discussion group with new people, to limit the discussion in that sort of way. I think it sometimes can save a lot of unnecessary discussion. Because people very easily confuse themselves and other people, and you also if you're not careful. Do you see what I'm getting at!? (Pause) So one might say, whether this explanation is true, or whether that explanation is true, or whether there is no explanation in a philosophical sense, nonetheless it is a fact that, if you do this, then on dependence upon that, such and such will happen. And that is what Buddhism is basically about from a practical point of view. And the Theravada doesn't go beyond that (Chuckles) and in some ways, wisely, doesn't go beyond that! (Pause)

Subhuti: It's back to Kulamitra again, - human consciousness as ~t~nctfrom self-consciousness.

Kulamitra: Yes. I felt that in the outlining of the points on dhyana, it wasn't entirely clear what are the characteristics of the human consciousness that emerges at point 1. on the graph

and how it differs from the self-consciousness that emerges at point 2.?

S.: Again perhaps it's a question of the point. I think I would regard self-consciousness as the growing point of what one might call 'human-consciousness'. But I don't think self-consciousness would be sufficient to make you fully human. It is as though as a result of the self-consciousness, you develop other qualities like sympathy, sensitivity towards other people, imagination, cooperativeness; and it's when all these qualities are also being developed, out of that self-consciousness is the seed that one can speak in terms of the fully human consciousness. I think that is how I would put it. If I was writing about it at length, I'd probably give it further thought but as far as I can see at present that is how I would distinguish between the two terms.. I think even historically, so to speak, we started off talking in terms of awareness and self-consciousness and then gradually added the other qualities of the true individual as it became evident that they would in fact, unfold from that initial self-consciousness. It seemed to have all sorts of implications which were gradually brought out.

Subhuti: So you're in a way saying that at point 2 and point 1 on your diagram, self-consciousness has emerged but only to a limited extent. That point 2, the mid-point represents the sort of completion of that?

S.: One could look at it that way. It might be that if I was to write out the effects in book form, I might revise that - I'm not sure. But bear that in mind! But in any case, I think one can speak in terms of there being an initial self-consciousness, wherever you put it, as it were, on the triangle, which gradually develops out of itself various other positive human qualities. So that self-consciousness is, as it were, the initial growing point.

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Subhuti: So that would mean that you would reverse the two points as you have them now. At the moment you have human-consciousness first, and then self-consciousness - that first glimmer of self-consciousness you would say comes before full human-consciousness?

S.: Yes, because when I distinguished human from animal, it's that self-consciousness that I had in mind as making the distinction. So yes, one could say that human consciousness as distinct from animal consciousness means that consciousness in which self-consciousness has begun to appear - that point at which sense-consciousness is succeeded by self-consciousness, that's the point where human-consciousness begins. But human consciousness, i.e. self-consciousness, goes on developing until you've got the whole range of human-consciousness or put it in other words, where self-consciousness is fully developed. So yes, perhaps I should revise or clarify my terminology by getting on to writing these things out, in book form.

Kulamitra: In the Dharmachakra tapes catalogue, you've got the point 1. as rudimentary ego consciousness.

S.: Yes, rudimentary ego-consciousness - yes, rudimentary suggests it isn't fully developed

and ego-consciousness suggests self-consciousness, yes. So it's rudimentary ego-consciousness leading into a fully developed ego-consciousness or fully developed human consciousness or self-consciousness. You can say, proto-human-consciousness and human-consciousness or rudimentary ego-consciousness and ego-consciousness, or you can say - there's a third possibility....

Voice: Reflexive consciousness

S.: Yes, reflexive consciousness - initial and complete, as it were. But it is as though, self-consciousness emerges from, or arises in dependence on, the sense-consciousness. At first it is very very minimal but it gradually grows and develops and other qualities develop out of it or as a consequence of it, when it reaches its full development, then, when it reaches point 2. on the hypotenuse, then, it can be spoken of either as self-consciousness, in a fully developed sense, or human consciousness in the fully developed sense and so on. On the hypotenuse, one must distinguish between the point at which something is regarded as beginning, and the point at which something is regarded as reaching its fullest complete development. So when I speak of point A as the point at which human consciousness emerges, I don't mean human-consciousness in the fully developed sense, but only human-consciousness in the sense of that initial spark of self-consciousness which differentiates between the human and the animal.

Sagaramati: I was wondering if maybe-bringing in traditional Buddhist pictures, you can see we've got the (niyamas) (S.: Yes, indeed) - you've got the citta-niyama and the karma-niyama. Would the initial ego- or self-consciousness, would that emerge on the level of the citta-niyama? or the karma-niyama? Or would the citta-niyama be sense-consciousness?

S.: Citta-niyama is not limited to sense-consciousness.

Sagaramati: So would rudimentary self-consciousness come from there?

S.: No, I think it would be difficult to make them correspond - yes, 7~as thinking incidentally, that one could try to correlate a traditional series but I think you'd have to have, say the animal world, the human world, the world of the gods. I mean, perhaps the Asura would represent ego-consciousness in its crude sense and the human world would represent the same, ego-consciousness as more highly dev-

eloped and refined, form. And then of course, the lower god realm,

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the higher god realm, then of course the Brahma-lokas. Of course, that doesn't provide a place for the pretas - one could bring them in but in a more complicated sort of way- not in a linear way.

Subhuti: We actually had a question on that - the Saddha-loka.

voice: I was just asking how might the various realms of being: hell-beings, pretas, asuras, gods - described in Buddhist tradition, be tied in with the picture of evolution described in the lecture?

S.: Well, as regards the lower evolution one is concerned with organic form. Is that not so?

In the case of lower evolution one is concerned with the evolution of organic form - you know, from the amoeba up to the human being considered as a physical organism. And then in the case of the higher evolution one is concerned with states of consciousness, though of course, states of consciousness which are in fact associated with the highest of organic forms, that is to say, the human. So it's as though, in the case of the lower evolution, one is concerned with organic form and in the case of the higher evolution, one is concerned explicitly with non-organic states. Alright one can make that more complex, because one can put, as it were, alongside the organic forms, the corresponding mental states, alongside the inorganic states, the corresponding organic - sometimes in single inverted commas - forms. Do you see what I mean? And this brings me to a general point that I've been giving a lot of thought to recently - it's been one of the things I've been mainly thinking about for the last few years - I have touched upon it before but it's not at all easy to formulate. I touched upon it in Sukhavati. What did I say? Do you remember how I put it then?

Sagaramati: You said you were getting a clear picture of it but (Laughs) ...you said you saw it.

~ Yes, but it's very difficult to put into words~, or even thoughts in a way.

Sagaramati: You just said, well, you can't explain evolution purely in mechanical terms; you can't explain it in vitalistic terms

S.: Didn't I say something like 'everything had a body'? Yes? Is that what I was thinking of? So if everything has a body, one could say everything, also has a mental state. In other words, there is an interior and exterior dimension to everything! So it's as though - in the case of the human being, you can say that the two are pretty well equal. They're sort of 50-50 - you know, quantifying it which is really impossible, but yes, you are body and mind. You feel very much that you're a body! You also feel very much that you're a mind. Well, how does an animal feel in those terms? (Voice: Inaudible) How does a deva feel? (Voice: Inaudible) Yea. Alright, where do the pretas come in then? The pretas don't have any gross material body, but a subtle material body like the beings in heaven according to tradition. So one would have to introduce a third category, that is to say, of subtle organic form or astral body or something like that. So then one would have to work it out, for instance, minerals have organic form and as far as one knows they don't have a subtle body except as in a very very rudimentary form and certainly no consciousness. Animals have a gross physical body - they have an astral body to some extent and the absolute rudiments of consciousness. Human beings have all three in quite highly developed forms. The lower gods have astral bodies and consciousnesses; the higher gods have consciousnesses but no astral bodies and the higher gods still,

they have even have more refined consciousnesses. So you can see here where the preta comes in. A preta has a developed astral body and a developed consciousness, but no gross physical body. So you could have three columns, as it were; side by side, representing 'gross physical body', subtle 'astral body', and 'consciousness' and mark out the different classes of beings accordingly in these different columns. I think one could make a chart in this kind of way. You could probably include the asuras too.

Ratnaprabha: You started off by saying that you the sort of picture that everything had a body and also everything had a sort of interior state as well...

S.: Up to of course, the point where the two as it were, coincide. Even there I'm not so sure the division doesn't obtain between a very very sort of subtle form.

Voice: Does this tie in in the Survey, where you describe what we call the Buddhist cosmological myth? You say, every step in the evolutionary process results from a coalescence between an upward movement of material progress and a downward movement of psychical spiritual degeneration?

S.: It may do. I must say, I haven't got as far as making that connection or seeing that connection, because I'm still working on this other question of the fact that everything has a body. This is how it seems. We're using the word 'body' in a very very general sort of way.

Ratnaprabha: But you excluded the higher gods from that? You said that they didn't have either a subtle or a physical body? traditionally speaking, at least.

S.: No, I don't think they can be excluded. The 'ultimate', to use that term, is perhaps not divided in that way, but everything short of that is divided, though sometimes the division is so subtle that one can't even see it. It's analogous to the division that we experience as the division between inner and outer. Our selves as subjects and our selves as objects, even to ourselves. I mean, our body is an object to ourselves. We perceive our body, but at the same time, we are, as it were, within it. We experience ourselves as subjects in a way that we don't experience other people and other people don't experience us.

Ratnaprabha: So you don't think it would be possible just to experience oneself as a naked subject with no form? of any kind.

S.: No. Because this partly ties up with my own experience because I think, years and years ago, I had a sort of 'out of the body' experience in connection with acupuncture - I talked about that more than once -but what struck me was that I was not only fully conscious, but I had, I was in the flame body, but I was looking down on the physical body. Of course, I wasn't in a gross physical body, I was in some other kind of body, but I wasn't disembodied, even though I was out of the body. One was simply in a more subtle body. But it was exactly the same experience on that other level. So one imagines that as becoming more and more subtle. (Pause)

Sagaramati: Do you see entering the Bardo as maintaining that subtle body?

S.: Yes, there is this traditional teaching anyway, yes. You have the Bardo experience in that subtle body. That's why sometimes it's so hard

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to realize that you're dead because you have a body. So your experience is just the same as it was! in a sense.

Vairocana: Would not our body be so small and dissolve in coming into your next rebirth, sort of thing?

S.: No, not dissolve but you become oblivious to it, just as you are oblivious to it during this lifetime. A process as though being in your physical body means that the physical and the astral, to use that term, coincides so that you can't distinguish them, but one can, as it were, be drawn out of the other. The phrase in the Pali canon which is used or the description which is used is like 'drawing the pith out of a reed'. The shape is exactly the same; the texture is almost the same; the colour is a bit different, lighter, and it's also physically lighter. But it's the same shape - the appearance is the same. Anyway, perhaps we're getting a little off the track of the actual lecture. There's not much time left.

Sagaramati: This isn't so much of a question. It's more of a Would'n't it be better to make point 0 on the chart as sub-atomic level, and not the amoebic level?

S.: Ah! I've said it could be either. Not that it really could be ~her - if you just want to confine yourself to the biological framework, well that would be the amoeba, but if you want to make it sort of as general as possible, as extensive as possible, of course, obviously it has to be the sub-atomic unit.

Sagaramati: The amoeba is a further stage...

S.: It depends to what extent you want to delimit the material and we ~know now, quite definitely, don't we, that there is evolution at the inorganic level.

Sagaramati: I thought it fits in with the niyamas

S.: That's true, also in way.

Subhuti: The resident scientists wish to inform us that the amoeba is not, in fact the lowest form of biological life.

S.: Do you mean that things like viruses are lower?

Ratnaprabha: No, that one of the lowest would be things similar to modern bacteria.

S.: Ah! So what would be the sort of scale - down to the bottom of the spectrum.

Ratnaprabha: By size, do you mean?

S.: I take it that it is strictly organic; in respect of actual evolution in fact it's known~

~rabha: Well it's not known very well, but there are so-called prokaryotic cells, are the first ones - that means cells without having a nucleus to them. (S.: Ah, the amoeba has a nucleus.) All the material in the cell is sort of smeared out, diffused throughout the fluid...

S.: It's even less differentiated, in fact.

Ratna rabha: Yes. And these would have been the only kind of organisms

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for perhaps, 2000 million years. (Laughter)

S.: Quite a big gap then, isn't it? (Laughter) Perhaps one can say that when one uses the word 'amoeba', one uses that more as a sort of symbol for all these very very low forms of life, but nonetheless, if one has a scientist in the audience, well, we need to face that there may be these other things too.

Subhuti: There's a non-scientific question from our resident scientist.

Ratna rabha: You say in the lecture, something like, 'don't even think of embarking upon a spiritual life until you've fulfilled your duty to become truly human'. I was wondering exactly what you meant by one having a duty to become truly human, or indeed having a duty to embark upon the spiritual life? for that matter - well, you don't say that in this lecture.

S.: I suppose one could say that it depends what you mean by 'duty'. Duty suggests a sort of moral criterion, doesn't it? It's as though to the extent that you are human already, you cannot but be moral, because if you're not being moral, you're not being human. Duty would seem to represent a sort of moral imperative, so unless you follow that moral imperative, well you aren't really human. In a way, it's a sort of terminology, I suppose - it's like saying, 'if you don't try to be more human, you're not being human'. So in that sense it's your duty to be human. To the extent that you are human, you will not be able to help trying to intensify your distinctively human characteristics. So I think it could probably be put in that sort of way. I'm not suggesting that there is some sort of duty, as it were, laid on you from without. Perhaps the word 'duty' is used rather loosely here. Perhaps it should be avoided. I think I've gone somewhere or other into this question of - oh yes, it must be in that Bodhisattva lecture - on it being as it were, one's nature to evolve, or one's nature to develop but again, one must be careful here that one doesn't end up with a naturalistic criterion of ethics. In other words, to be moral means acting in accordance with well, nature.

Vessantara: Well on a lower level you get quotes from Shakespeare, that there is an art which transcends nature, and that art is nature itself. That sort of corresponds with that quote doesn't it?

S.: Yes, there of course, one recognizes different levels in nature, because the nature that has

been worked on, by nature is at a higher level, as it were, than the nature that has not been worked on by nature. In other words, the more human you are, the more highly developed your sense of duty. In other words, the more highly developed your sense of duty, the more human you'll become and so on. Perhaps the word 'duty' at this level or in this connection should be avoided. By virtue of the fact that you are a human being, there is a sort of moral obligation - obligation is not the right word, - a sort of moral imperative, by virtue of which you try to be more human still. It means self-consciousness leads to more self-consciousness. Awareness or self-awareness leads to more awareness.

Abhaya: Are we to take it that the lower evolution has reached its limit so to speak, with homo sapiens and that from now on, the higher evolution will be confined to that one species? In other words, that aquatic animals, have finished once and for all, transforming into mammals and so on. The way they will evolve from now on will be by rebirth as humans? Is this ...?

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S.: I must say, this isn't anything I've given consideration to. I'm not so sure we can assume that. Because we're familiar with the idea, that evolution is not a very tidy process, is it? If you look at the sort of evolutionary tree, it's got all sorts of branches, and sometimes very big branches spring up from very small branches, very thick branches from very thin branches, so at present homo sapiens represent the crown of the evolutionary process, but there's no reason I suppose, unless there are, as it were, mechanical reasons against it - why some lower form of life shouldn't sort of branch off from lower down but taking a different sort of a course, emerge eventually, at an even higher level, in terms of the consciousness associated with that particular organic form that eventually emerges. I wouldn't like at this point to be sure that that couldn't happen. Do you see what I mean? So it could be, for instance, that if dolphins, for instance, went on developing and developing and eventually a super-dolphin was produced which was organically superior to a human being. I'm not quite sure how you'd measure that, presumably in terms of the associated state of consciousness and that the dolphin would have as it were, overtaken - or the descendant of the dolphin would have overtaken present day man. This is not inconceivable, though there may be certain scientific reasons why it's impossible that I'm not aware of. So I wouldn't like to preclude the possibility in the present state of my knowledge.

(End of Tape 1)

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Abhaya: The species that have already evolved, organically, have evolved to their limit, so to speak, and there's no further evolution, That's it!

S.: But what does limit mean? It means, as it were, I think, that when it occurs, that no further adaptation has taken place, but the fact that adaptation - further adaptation hasn't taken place for millions of years, doesn't mean that that species has come to an end because it

merely means that the environment hasn't changed. The adaptation to the environment is successful. The environment doesn't change, therefore, the organism doesn't need to change! But supposing the environment changes? As it would, for instance, if there was a nuclear holocaust - well then you might get all sorts of adaptations arising in an organic form, human as well as non-human. So I think therefore that one can't actually state that any living form has definitely come to the end of its evolution. It's found an ecological, environmental niche to which it's perfectly adapted for the time being.

Ratnaprabha: Julian Huxley apparently has suggested that mammalian evolution has stopped - with the arising of homo sapiens, he says that there's no evidence for any further evolution taking place in any mammalian species. And it seems to have slowed down all other species. This seems quite a strange thing to say, but he is a very very distinguished biologist. I've not come across this anywhere else.

S.: But he's still only saying really that for the time being, adaptation is perfect.

Ratnaprabha: Well he seems to be implying that it's connected with the emergence of self-consciousness as if self-consciousness, as it were, were the goal of the lower evolution. And now the lower evolution has sort of served its purpose and is no longer functioning.

S.: In some ways, it would be nice to think in that kind of view, but then one need not assume, I think, that the higher evolution couldn't be reached from more than one route. I think that one couldn't rule out that kind of possibility a priori, though there may be further reasons for that of what I am not aware of for what he says being true. But there seems to me no logical reason why the homo sapiens should be indefinitely the most highly developed species.

Abhaya: So you could define the lower evolution then as organic forms adapting continuously as necessary to changes in the environment?

S.: Yes, of course again it could be said that once self-consciousness had developed in whatsoever species, in that species would have so great an advantage over all other species that it would be able to limit their development. But again it could be that some other organic form, - say dolphins, who are so cunning and work in such an indirect way that it completely evaded the efforts of that self-conscious organism to control it. These are perfectly logical speculations and one can't be too sure. But certainly a self-conscious species would have a very great advantage over those that weren't and could wipe them all out as in fact it has already wiped out quite a lot of them. (Pause) Have we got many questions by the way?

Subhuti: We've got two more.

Voice: Just to return to the Buddhist cosmological myth, - you spoke of Buddhism positing a subjective spiritual world or plane in addition to the objective world of plane of matter, so that Buddhism therefore maintains that the line of biological development from amoeba to man

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isn't single but double - being the joint product of a process of spiritual degeneration: involution, on the one hand and a material progress or evolution on the other. Do you have

any further comments on this and how this process is tied in...? texts

S.: Only to a very limited extent because BuddhistAdon't go into this but there are other traditions also. At the, as it were, beginning of a new evolutionary (era), there is a sort of split - there is sort of a 'big bang' in a way and the split is between the extreme of let's say, the spiritual and the extreme of the material. They are completely separated. But in the process of cosmic evolution they start affecting each other; they start perfuming each other, you might say. So that each starts drawing near to the other. They exert a gravitational pull on each other. So as a result of the gravitational pull of matter on spirit, spirit starts to infold and as a result of the gravitational pull of spirit on matter, matter starts to efold . And then a point comes where the two, as it were, touch and that is the point at which, as it were, subtle entities start actually descending into gross material bodies and that's where you get the convergence between the two processes - the descending and the ascending. This is roughly speaking the general Buddhist point of view, except that it doesn't explain it quite in those terms as regards the original 'big-bang'. It tends not to go into ultimate origins. Well, they are not ultimate origins, one might say, but origins as regards the present world or cosmic period. (Pause) Buddhism tends to concentrate on the process of getting out of the Samsara, so to speak, rather than explaining how you got into it in the first place, anyway. But some schools of thought maintain that the one is the exact reverse of the other but I personally don't think that is really the Buddhistic view for various reasons.

Voice: I didn't quite understand.

S.: The process of getting out of the Samsara is the exact reverse of the process by which you originally got into it, but I think that is not really the Buddhist view. I think that is one of the views which was in fact condemned by the Buddha. That is to say, in respect of ultimate origins, as distinct from origins within a particular cosmic process or cosmic period. We won't go into that this evening.

Subhuti: There's one last question from Kulamitra.

Kulamitra: I have to give you a diagram at this point, Bhante. I thought of a way of redrawing the diagram which I think has one or two improvements. . . . I'm not sure what the technical name is for that curve - someone told me - an exponential curve; I thought it was a better alternative because that for one thing it has no beginning and no end, because it ends up parallel to the axis and I thought also because there is that exponential movement in evolution, in that self-consciousness and then transcendental consciousness actually significantly speed up, accelerate the process. And I thought this way, it was illustrated in the graph itself, and brought the graph closer to the reality. I wondered if you agreed (Laughter)

S.: Yes. It's quite true, an exponential curve does illustrate that particular point. But then I also add a point in having points at the upper and lower ends of the hypotenuse - because it they're open ended there, they should be very open ended there. But if you really do justice to the situation, they should be neither open-ended nor not open-ended. (Laughter) If they're open ended they make one particular point, but if they're not open-ended, they make another particular point. Actually you really need to make both, but there's no way of doing that, at least in a design or graph.

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Subhuti: Isn't that actually the case in~the exponential curve, because it meets the other line at infinity, so it does meet it but it never meets it.

S.: Oh, that's true- in that case, yes. But you can't actually see that - but you don't actually see it meeting but not meeting. You see it not meeting. (Laughter) Whereas here, it's meeting. You have to make an infinite graph - on an infinite graph, parallel lines would meet.

Ratnaprabha: It's actually a hyperbole and not an exponential curve.

S.: Is it? What is the difference?

Ratnaprabha: An exponential curve would look similar but that line would be over there. Just there. (Laughter)

S.: I always heard of a hyperbole as a figure of speech. (Laughter) We could perhaps have some of this as a dotted line.

Kulamitra: I thought, actually, that thing of sort of accelerating impact of those two different things - self-consciousness and trans- cendental consciousness. ...

S.: That's quite an important point because that isn't showing in the chart as it is.

Kulamitra: And it's not really brought out in the lectures either, as far as I can see - at least there are implications but not explicitly.

S.: Yes, in fact in a way - I think I even mentioned this. On the hypotenuse, I've not even tried to make it proportionate to the actual time scale. You need a very very detailed chart, indeed, to do that. OK, talking of time scales - we've got another day tomorrow. Let's leave it there, then....

(End of Day One)

Subhuti: The first question is from Ratnaprabha... (unclear)... .proposed corrections.

Ratn~rabha: It's not necessarily corrections, it's just perhaps getting it up to date. (S.: Right) ...The first one is the age of human evolution.

S.: I thought that one would come up, because yes, the lecture was given 18 years ago, and from time to time I have been aware of every five or six years, they seem to push back the origin of the human race, quite a bit more. I don't know what the latest count is. Perhaps Ratnaprabha can tell us~

Ratnaprabha: Yes. I've looked this up. This is from March last year and basically you could say that you're still correct in saying ½ million years, because homo sapiens, our own species, is ½ million years old. But humanity goes back further than that, in terms of human-like creatures.

S.: Ah. But there's a difference between human and human-like.

Ratnaprabha: Well, it's difficult to know what marker to use, but tool use, goes back to about 2 million years.

S.: Yes, yes, but even that's not altogether clear, because as a distinctive feature of humanity, because some investigators believe

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that some of the higher apes do on occasion, use tools.

Ratnaprabha: I should clarify this and say that this is actually making tools out~of stone so that it can be used as an axe or scraper. That goes back to 2 million years and fire was probably first used about 700,000 years ago. So creatures much like humans existed 4 million years ago.

S.: I think I mentioned a figure of 4 million years or so in some context, don't it? Do I in that lecture, mention 4 million?

Voice: No.

S.: Of course in some ways, we don't know very much, because often we've only a few, either fossil remains or skeletal remains and they sort of build up a whole picture from that. As for the actual mentality of these proto-humans or semi-human species, we don't know very much. They infer a certain amount from the shape of the skull and the cubic content. But we haven't really very much to go on. (Pause) So what difference does that make to the actual lecture?

RP: None.

S.: Doesn't really. It's filled in the picture a little more.

RP: You used the figure of 1/2 million years, which is correct for our species, but if one wanted to use, say, tool users, then that would be 2 million years.

S.: I haven't defined humanity. Presumably if we're homo sapiens in scientific terms, in terms of tool-use, but in terms of the initial development of self-consciousness - though again, of course, it has been recently argued, and I believe I've referred to this somewhere or other, probably on a seminar - that some chimpanzees are known or at least it's said that they're known to have some degree of self-consciousness. They have apparently proved, or at least to their own satisfaction, by experiments with chimpanzees and mirrors. But in some ways that's not surprising, because one can't think in terms of a complete hiatus between one species and another. One would expect to find a little anticipation of what became more fully apparent later on. For instance, I've noticed myself, talking of animals that dogs can definitely have a guilty expression on their faces (Laughter) or in their eyes. In a way, if there's any human emotion which dogs feel, I'm sure there's at least guilt, unfortunately. Perhaps it's a bit interesting because perhaps the human being stands, in relation to the dog -

that is to say, dog owner, stands to the dog - as God to a devout human being (Laughter). So it is not surprising that you get this corresponding emotion - the 'great bone-provider in the sky' sort of thing (Laughter). Subhuti was recently accused of identifying God exclusively with the 'great store-detective in the sky'. Anyway, we'll go into that on some other occasion.

Maybe I should say a few more points on this point Ratnaprabha raised. If I was to write these lectures out in proper book form, which would mean enlarging them, I would have to go into all those sort of things in some detail which would involve no doubt, quite a bit of research and making sure that I did have all the most up-to-date information at my disposal. I'd have to be more precise than it was necessary to be in a lecture. But I think those who are dealing with this material in the context of study [24] HEM (M) 2/5 24

groups should perhaps do a little bit of reading up and make sure that they are properly posted as to the latest developments. And this brings me to a more general point: I think for those who are taking or leading study, it's not enough merely to be acquainted with the study text or with the appropriate lecture. You've got to also have your own independent thought on the subject and also do some independent research or at least independent follow-up. If I've for instance, referred to a particular book or a certain authority, look that book up, look that authority up, for yourself and see what it says, and try to understand why I've used it or how I've used or see whether it can be used to a greater extent than I've done myself. Do you see what I mean? Don't rely simply on the material I've given. Don't rely simply on the material as given. Supplement it, add to it, enlarge upon it in as many ways as you can. I think this is quite important, especially perhaps within this sort of field where new discoveries are being made all the time. It also applies to literary references. If I, say, refer to Blake, don't be satisfied with saying that Bhante says that Blake is very important here, where in fact, you haven't read a line of Blake. That's not good enough. Go and read and why I have said that Blake is very important here. Have something of your own to draw on and contribute to the discussion along the lines indicated. I think very often, people who lead or take study are content just with an approximate understanding of the material actually given. They don't try to go beyond it or behind it.

Ratnaprabha: There were one or two other revisions as it were, which may be a bit quibbly, but I'll just mention them briefly. Firstly, you speak of human history as covering a span of ½ million years. I think usually the term history, refers to a period of hand-written records. (S.: That's true) So this would be history, and pre-history would cover that span. (S.: Yes, yes)

You also at one point, make a remark about stone age people living in caves. You do actually later, elaborate on this slightly, but, strictly speaking, not many of them apparently lived in caves. This would be only in the very cold countries. You use the term, at one point, 'eolithic'. I think that's now an out of date term. I don't think that's used any longer, as far as I know. So, there's no distinction between the eolithic and paleolithic and so you just have the paleolithic or old-stone age being talked of.

S.: Yes, I think for this one, one needs to consult the latest edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica. In some books that I've consulted, it's even stated that the terminology has now been changed. I think in some other respects, some of the terms for geological eras have been changed. Haven't they recently? (RP: Yes) Again, one needs to be as up to date as possible.

Ratnaprabha: And finally you make a remark about, I think, 'gathering' being a stage before 'hunting'. I don't know, this may be the way you just say it, rather than a particular assertion?

S.: I think I speak of 'hunting and gathering' or 'gathering and hunting', don't I?

Subhuti: I think you do later hunting.

Ratnaprabha: I just mention this because as far as I know, it's not known in what order 'gathering and hunting' started - whether they started together or separately, or what.

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S.: It also raises the question of, well, what does one mean by hunting? If one grabs a young rabbit, is that hunting? Does hunting involve the conscious pursuit of game? with or without weapons? Yes, one needs to be very careful how one formulates these different points, so that you can't be, as it were, faulted by any particular expert. You shouldn't be more definite than the evidence actually warrants.

Subhuti: Suvajra's got a question on knowledge and the age of primitive man.

Suvajra: In the Eolithic and Paleolithic period, you say that man had no knowledge in our sense of the word. What was the nature of knowledge in primitive man?

S.: Don't I elaborate on that later on? I mean, for instance, he has no knowledge of, say, his own history, or even that of his own tribe. There might be a few traditions handed down; but the point I was trying to make was that his knowledge would be very limited. He would actually know very little. His knowledge would be limited to his own experience, his own observation and to such memories as had been handed down, perhaps from very few generations past. He'd have no sort of general knowledge about the country in which he lived, or there wouldn't be a conception of 'country'. He'd have no knowledge about other parts of the world. He'd have no knowledge about previous ages. He'd have no knowledge about the different Ice Ages, for instance. So I think I'm trying to say simply that primitive man was very very limited in his knowledge. That is the big distinction I am trying to make.

Suvajra: I may have been trying to read more into it, but I was thinking in terms of the two distinctions of knowledge that you made last night. One being a higher knowledge. The other being a lower sense knowledge. Would primitive man have had a higher knowledge? Especially in light of your comment that there were the first beginnings of crude religions and the first cosmogenic myths.

S.: I think it depends on the sort of period with which one is concerned or the length of time with which one is concerned, because primitive man, covers really quite a vast period. Yes, certainly towards the end of that period, myths started to be elaborated. But at the beginning of that period, it would seem that man had risen a very little way, about a very limited sense knowledge. I forget how many thousand years I've said the period of primitive man lasted. How many was it? How many years did I allocate to that? (Voices: 500,000) So that's along time isn't it? So it's towards the end of that period - I don't know whether we can even speak in terms of thousands of years. I don't think we know exactly how many thousands of years each stage of development took - but we can be pretty certain that at the end of that ½ million year period, yes, primitive religion as we called it, had developed. Myths had developed; legends had developed and so on. But at the very beginning

of that period, there would have been very little more than knowledge based upon our own immediate sense consciousness, together with the experience and a few recollections on the part of the few elders of the tribe. I think a general point here is that one is trying to get a sort of picture of general development. Exactly where certain items are to be allocated is not always possible to be sure. You know that it was in that particular band, that particular broad period, but whether it was in this century or that or even in this 10,000

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year period or that, is sometimes quite impossible to say. Nor can you always be quite sure whether this came before that. Also there was the question of different paces of evolution in different parts of the world. That also has to be taken into account. So one has to speak in a very very general sort of way and try just to get a general feeling, a general picture of the whole process of development over a period of thousands, even hundreds of thousands of years. Quite a number of books by the way which do describe this whole process in comparative detail - I do have a number of them upstairs in my collection of books on evolution. So it isn't very difficult to read up on these things. There are quite good popular accounts of these various stages of development and they all tell, quite broadly, the same picture.

Subhuti: Abhaya has a question on language and self-consciousness.

Abhaya: Does the emergence of self-consciousness precede language or is the arising of language inherently bound up with the appearance of self-consciousness?

S.: As far as I'm aware, the current thinking is that one can't really speak in terms of successive stages, but the one is bound up with the other. It may be that one did come before the other, but it would have been only a short time before the other - such a short time before - we can't really detect the difference in it, at this distance in time. So it would seem - this is what I gather - that most authorities in this field now believe that the development of language and the development of self-consciousness are really bound up with each other.

Ratnaguna: Does language have a great effect on self-consciousness then, do you think? You think it feeds back and helps self-consciousness to emerge?

S.: This~ is what it means presumably, or at least not to emerge but to develop. For instance, when you start speaking you start referring to yourself; you start referring to other people. The fact that you can refer to yourself - the fact that you can say "I" and not simply "you", means that you have at least the beginnings of reflexive consciousness. I think it's well known, I think I'm correct in saying that children being by, or babies begin by referring to themselves in the third person, don't they? Because they hear other people, for instance they hear mother say, "Baby, do you want this? Or baby, do you want that?" and the baby says, "No. Baby doesn't want that - not, "I don't want that" but "Baby doesn't want that". After a while, it discovers that baby is "I" and that mother is not "I", - mother is "you" - mother is mother". In this way, the baby not only learns to distinguish self from other, but learns to speak of itself as though it was an other. In other words, it starts developing reflexive consciousness. So it would seem that this was hardly possible without language.

I do believe that there has been in recent years a lot of research into the origins of

language and the child's use of language. I'm only aware of it in a very general way. If I were to write up these lectures in book form, I'd have to do a lot of reading up on this sort of subject.

Subhuti: Padmavajra has a question on mantras.

Padmavajra: This arose out of a discussion of language and the things you've been saying about the primordial: the effect of,

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-say, Tibetan chanting on our nervous system. I wondered, - are mantras, or could mantras be seen as a marriage of the primal roots of language with the experience of the Transcendental?

S.: Well, that's an interesting question! I'm not so sure about the experience of the transcendental but perhaps one could say the primordial roots of language with some kinds of higher spiritual experience, at least. But I think, a case could be made out for that. It does seem that very early speech - certainly as we have it in very early poetry like that, say, of the Rig-Veda, has some sort of mantraic quality about it. I have read recently - I forget where - something to the effect that, we don't always realize how important, in a way, speech was to early man; what a discovery it represented. There's a touch of this in the Bible - I think it is the Bible? - where the animals are brought to Adam and he names them. Milton has elaborated on this, hasn't he? It's as though the act of naming - I think even poets like Rilke go into this - is a quite wonderful experience: - to be able to name something. The name, as it were, also expresses the essence of that thing; in a sense, is that thing. If you know its name, you know that thing. If you know it, you have it, as it were, under your control. So magic comes into it. The word is magical; the word has a kind of magic power. I think we've largely lost that since. Even in poetry, that is to say, modern poetry, doesn't convey it often any longer. Even some very fine poetry of the past, say, a few hundred years, still doesn't convey that quality very strongly. You see we have to go back a long way to arrive at literature, or what became literature, which conveys that sort of quality. (pause) I'd like to think of something further. I think there's been quite a bit of investigation recently into what I think is called comparative linguistics' and trying to get back to a sort of limited number of basic roots of language. I think I've mentioned in Tuscany that this was done in India in ancient times. They did believe that all the words in the Sanskrit language could be reduced to or traced back to 160 roots. Those 160 roots represent not just basic ideas in the abstract sort of sense but 160 sort of basic ways of experiencing the world and expressing what you experience and what you felt. I've only come across passing references to these things, but I do believe that there are quite a number of people working in this field at present. It is something that perhaps someone should look into. It does seem as though there are all sorts of fields that we need to know a little more or at least to explore a little more. Clearly one person can't do all this. It would be good if different people took up different fields and fed back the results of their researches into the movement - at least by way of contributions to Shabda.

Subhuti: Tejamitra on previous Buddhas:

Tejamitra: How does the traditional point of view that there were previous Buddhas in this Kalpa, fit in with our knowledge of history and evolution, especially bearing in mind the Buddha's statements about his experiences in previous lives and apart from that?

S.: I don't think the statements which we have in the Buddhist scriptures about previous Buddhas, fits into modern scientific knowledge, about earlier ages at all. But this is an interesting question. I think we can look at it in two different ways. It is of course remarkable that references,

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specific references to earlier Buddhas by name, occur only in what would appear to be in the later portions of the Pali canon. That's point no. one. Point number two is that it would seem even in the earliest portions of the canon, the idea of previous Buddhas is there, but they're not actually named. Nothing is said about exactly how long ago they lived. In later Buddhism of course, both Hinayana and Mahayana, we're given a lot of information about previous Buddhas. If you go through the canon, you'll probably find detailed information about some hundreds of Buddhas if not thousands. But, yes, in so far as the Pali canon is concerned one sees after a while, appearing a list of seven previous Buddhas and a list of 21 previous Buddhas, quite a bit later. But nonetheless, it would seem from the very beginning, the Buddha himself did speak in terms of previous Buddhas. This of course, raises the question of in what sense did he use the term 'Buddha', because the meaning of the word 'Buddha' underwent some change anyway. For instance, there is that famous parable of the ancient road and the ancient city. Do you remember that one? Where the Buddha says that he has rediscovered that ancient city and cleared the path leading to it. I think he goes on to say that that path was traversed in previous ages. So if that path was traversed in previous ages, it means that in previous ages, there were people who were enlightened; people who were Buddhas, at least in the broad sense of the term. Do you see what I mean? So it does seem that the Buddha himself, the historical Buddha, did look as it were, toward predecessors - did think of himself as having predecessors. Whether he thought of them in the specific way in which they're described in what would seem to be later texts, that's very difficult to say. In any case that's a different matter. Do you see the point? So then the question arises, well, supposing the Buddha was thinking in terms of predecessors, well, where were these predecessors? Where did they live? And this is where I've been having a little theory of my own lately, that the Buddha was looking perhaps, not in terms of conscious geographical knowledge, but looking rather to Sumeria and to Iran. Because we know that in Sumeria they did think in terms of ages. They also had in ancient Sumerian religion, the conception of people living for a very very long period - hundreds if not thousands of years. You have that same conception in later Buddhist works. That perhaps is some reflection of that in the Old Testament, in the ages of the patriarchs. Perhaps the Jews developed those ideas as they developed many other ideas during the Babylonian captivity where they came in contact with Iranian religion and so on and so forth. But anyway, it would seem to me, that if the Buddha is or can be said to be looking back, as it were, in any sort of historical sense to any sort of previous historical, as distinct from mythical or legendary epoch, he can't be looking back within the context of India and Vedic religion, which was of a different type and a quite primitive type. He must have been looking back, if anywhere, to Iran and Sumeria. There are other reasons why I think that - I'll only mention it briefly: there is this question of Buddhist cosmology. The Buddha speaks of

Brahmins attaining the Brahmaloaka and so on in past ages and in connection with the Brahmaloaka, there's whole cosmology. There's the various Kamaloka heavens, the r~paloka heavens, arupa- loka heavens are not only

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S.: . . They're not only mentioned, but names of all these planes are given. Now I've not been able to find any reference to any of those planes in Pre-Btiddhist Indian tradition, except the lowest- that is to say, the heave~s of the Kama-loka or some of those, especially the heaven of Indra (unclear) Devaloka, the 33 Gods or the 33 Vedic Gods. Well, what about all the gods and Brahmas above that? They are not mentioned to the best of my knowledge, in Vedic llterature, at all. So where, as it were, did they come from? Because the Buddha seems, according to the Pali canon, to be referring to people attaining these levels in earlier ages; again that would seem to point to Sumeria and/or Iran, to that direction. I've not been able to confirm that by any detailed investigation into Iranian religion, but that is a possible source. But what is clear, is the source could not have been within the present day India or within the Vedic religion. There was a sort of definite discontinuity between Buddhism and the Vedic religion so that where the Buddha refers to any antecedents or to, as it were, Brahmins of ancient times, he could not have really been speaking in terms of the Indian historical context, or in terms of Vedic religion. Another instance I mentioned is that Buddhism speaks from the beginning in terms of body, speech and mind. We don't find 'body, speech and mind' as a triad in the Vedic literature. So these are little pointers - one can't regard them as proven, but it seems to me that there is a possibility that if there are any sort of - not exactly historical origins - but earlier anticipations of the Buddha and his teachings ; if there's anything of which his teachings may be regarded as the restoration or the rediscovery, it is to be sought in the Middle East and not in India.

Padmavajra: Doesn't Joshi have a theory about the previous Buddhas is perhaps referring to sigificant people in the Sramanic tradition in his book "On Discerning Buddha"?

S.: But then that raises the question of the origin of the Sramanic tradition itself, because the Jain tradition is in some ways, close to the Buddhist tradition. The Sramanic tradition is mainly the Buddhist ttadition and the Jain tradition. Could it not perhaps be speculated at least that the whole Sramanic tradition has its origins in the Middle East rather than in present day India itself. It has in any case been suggested, I think even by Joshi, that there are some connections in the Sramanic traaition with the cult- ure of (Mahendo dharo?) and that is generally considered to be a colony of Sumeria, of Babylonia. I've only just touched on a point here and there. The case cannot be regarded as proven, but only as an interesting idea which could be followed up.

Kuladeva: How then do episodes in the Pali canon - I remember it saying for instance, that the Buddha smiles on reaching a certain spot and explains to Ananda in a former age, the Buddha in a pre- ious lifetime met another Buddha....I think it occurs a couple of times in the Middle Length sayings, where he refers to a particular geographical location.

S.: But then of course, one would have to see the exact period of that particular stratum of

the canon. The Majjimanikaya does contain relatively earlier and also relatively late material. When I say relatively late, I mean material which perhaps originated around the time of Ashoka or even later than that. I mean, for instance in C)Nepal, and even in central Asia, many spots were pointed out as spots where certain things

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happened in the Buddha's previous lives. But to what extent that was based on anything said by the Buddha himself or whether it was said, based on an attempt to develop the importance of a particular local shrine, is very difficult to say. But certainly one needs to comb through the whole Pali canon and possibly a few other early sources, looking at references of this sort and seeing what effect they had on the period. There's even been a lot of dispute as to where the Buddha actually passed away - where Kusinara actually was. Some scholars held, not so many years ago, that it's not the present day village of Duriya in United Provinces but it's in Assam somewhere.

~arabha: So would you discount the possibility of simply taking these passages literally as the Buddha referring to previous Buddhas in very very distant past ages?

S.: No, I wouldn't discount that completely, because one, as it were, two different contexts. One which is accessible to history in the modern sense, and the other which is not accessible at all. If we accept those accounts, we do so purely out of our faith in the scriptures, especially the Mahayana Sutras. We've no other means of knowing about them. So it is not that one necessarily cancels out the other, but whereas one could, for instance, know about predecessors of the Buddha, within the previous two or three thousand years - one could perhaps find out something about them in an historical scientific sort of way - one certainly couldn't find out anything in that sort of way, about Buddhas in other Buddha-fields, thousands of millions of years ago. That's a quite different kind of thing. But one does not necessarily exclude the other, though one of course, could take the view that the second was a sort of amplification of the first, and only of broadly symbolical significance - not to be taken literally. But one finds for instance, among the Jains, that they have a series of (kittankaras?) and it is believed by most scholars, I think it was (parshava), Mahavira' 5 immediate predecessor, lived about three or four hundred years before he did.

Subhuti: He was an historical...?

S.: Yes, they seem to regard him as an historical person, and certainly not as a mythical figure - I think it was Parshava. And that is interesting in view of the fact that they do have very similar beliefs in this respect. In the same way with Zoro- astra or Zarathustra. I do refer to the Zoroastra, as living around the time of the Buddha and this is the generally accepted view. But it seems as if there were a whole series of Zarathustras going back to two or three thousand B.C. (Pause) So what I'm really saying is, if there's any sort of historical basis, historical in the ordinary sense - to the Buddha's references to previous Buddhas, I think it is much more likely that that his- torical basis is to be located in the Middle East, than within the confines of present day India~ which is rather revolutionary perhaps.

There are also links, it would seem, between the Mahayana and certain teachings current in Central Asia, possibly connected with Zoroastranism, Moflot~eism and that whole complex of ideas and developments. There are great big gaps in our knowledge - I

begin to be aware of this. I begin to feel that there are several chapters missing in the general history of Buddhism. We usually think in terms of, well, Buddhism in India, Buddhism in S.E. Asia, Buddhism in China, Japan and Tibet. But there are two great big chapters missing. One is Buddhism in Central Asia~.

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We know from Aurel Stein's excavations, and we know from other sources that - from (Yuan Chwang) for instance, that the whole of central Asia was a flourishing Buddhist civilization and it was overrun by the Muslims. But a lot of Buddhism, I believe, persisted underneath and even influenced Sufism. So that whole chapter is hardly mentioned in general books on Buddhism. And then Indonesian Buddhism - that is never mentioned, but that produced Borab~dur - so it couldn't have been negligible. So it is as though we do have still quite an in- complete picture, even general picture of the development of Buddhism. I come to feel that central Asia, broadly speaking, especially for Mahayana Buddhism - but Eastern Iran - the °Kurisan area - as more and more important for the develop- ment of thought in general. It was there that the northern Suf is developed and I'm sure that there is some Buddhist connection. Recently I've been reading(?)~ehosephat who was sort of a product of that same sort of melting pot; a sort of Manichean version of the life of the Buddha, translated into all the Middle Eastern and modern European languages, so that the Buddha is even- tually transformed into a Christian Saint, in fact, into two Christian Saints. It's really an extraordinary story. And then again I keep picking up bits and pieces of in form- ation from my general reading. For instance, you've all heard of the famous Haroun-al-Rashid, the Khalif of the Arabian Nights - there was a famous family in his service usually called the, I think, Barmecides - I see, according to my sources, it should be pronounced Barmekids - but there is a Feast of the Barmecides or Feast of the Barmecids - a tantalizing feast. Barmecide ;L5 apparently a title - I've not been able to check up on this, - but I gather is the title of a Buddhist High Priest of Kurisan and that the Barmeci~swere a Buddhist family that entered the service of the Khalif's, wrote the (?) of the Wazirs and eventually became Muslims. So there are all sorts of things of that sort that I've come across - all sorts of connections between Sufism and Buddhism, or parallels. How come Sufis and Dervishes wear patched cloaks - they always wear patched cloaks and these patched cloaks are sort of handed down from master to pupil as signs of spiritual authority. This doesn't seem very Islamic - it seemsratherBuddhistic. And we know that that whole region was Buddhist and there are ruins even now. So, it seems that that whole region played an important part, possibly, in the development of very early Buddhism and cert- ainly played some part in the development or elaboration of the Mahayana later on. Some Mahayana Sutras in any case, it seems, were written down - I say written down and not written - in central Asia and not in India. So it's as though the Islamic invasion - the conversion of people in that area to Islam, just obscured that whole picture; just as the fact that Islam overran the whole of the Byzantine Empire. We forget that, for instance, that present day Turkey for hundreds of years was a stronghold of Christianity, Christian civilization, Christian thought, Christian spiritual life. We never think of it as Christian, but it was for hundreds of years. Some of the greatest of the Church fathers came from that area. In the same way, we never think of North Africa as Christian, but it was; Christian civilization for hundreds of years. That's where St. Augustine came from. St. Augustine was probably a Berber. He wasn't a Caucasian. (Pause)

So I begin to see, you know, for want of a better term, the whole Zoroastrian complex of religious ideas as having a very very important part to play in the development of religion

generally, both in the East and in the West. For instance, there's Angelology - that influence is altogether out of proportion to the actual numbers of the Zoroastrians today. Because Zoroastrianism influenced Judaism, influenced Islam and through Judaism, influenced Christianity. It influenced Manicheism and it influenced Mahayana Buddhism to some extent too. Adds up to quite a lot of influence, doesn't it.' Anyway, that's all by the by. I'm just keeping you up-to-date as regards some of the things I've been thinking about. I certainly won't be able to explore all of these things myself. I mention them now, just in case I don't get another opportunity. It's only a few hundred years ago, that people were not aware of the connection between, for instance, Sanskrit and the European languages like Greek and Latin. Several hundred years ago they weren't aware that the Buddha of India was the same as the (?) of China. The connection hadn't been established. In the same way, I am sure that there are lots of cultural and religious links that we haven't yet discovered or rediscovered. (pause) Anyway, let's carry on, - I mustn't digress too much.

Abhaya: In that quotation from Jaspers that you read out in the lecture, Bhante, he says, "Myth was transformed and infused with deep meaning in the very moment when the myth as such was destroyed." I wondered whether you could comment on that?

S.: I think what he was getting at, that the myth was given an, as it were, philosophical meaning at that very point, at that very moment, when people ceased to believe in it literally. You see this happening all the time. Why should people want, in a sense, to give a deeper meaning to a myth? - using the word 'myth' in a very broad sense, to include even legends. Why are they concerned to give it a deeper meaning? It's because they're not satisfied with the literal meaning. Maybe it offends their moral sense or maybe it is crude. Do you see what I mean? There seems to be a sort of movement of allegorization in all religions after they reach a certain point, except Buddhism. In the case of Buddhism, it seems to have happened the other way around. It's well-known that the Greeks eventually became quite uncomfortable with their various myths and legends - because some of those offended their moral sense. We know that there's a great difference between the mythology of Homer and the mythology of Hesiod. Hesiod represents a much earlier and more primitive stage of Greek mythology. Homer has severely pruned all that. But even some of the Homeric myths and legends weren't very acceptable, later on and some Greek writers, tried, as it were, to allegorize them. There's the famous work of Porphyry, for instance, on the cave of the Nymphs in the Odyssey. He gives I think, the allegorical or philosophical meaning to that particular incident - at the Cave of the Nymphs. There's that same sort of tendency at work in Judaism. For instance, there is the famous (Philo of Alexandria?) who tried to, as it were, allegorize some of the contents of the Old Testament. So this would seem to be a general sort of tendency. It's a sort of evolutionary thing, one might say. One doesn't want to discard the old traditions completely, but in their crudity, they very often offend one. So one starts giving them an allegorical meaning, an allegorical significance, just because you can no longer believe them literally. So therefore, loss of faith in their literal meaning, or inability to accept them in a literal sense, does coincide with the giving of those myths and legends, the deep&r

philosophical meaning. And I take it that this is what Karl Jaspers is getting at. We find the same sort of thing happening, in fact with Christianity. A lot of people can't accept the Virgin Birth, as a literal historical fact but they can accept it as a beautiful symbol. They can allegorize it. Some people say that original Christianity was really myth but it was understood as history by the Church, but that may or may not be the case. But it would seem that in the case of Buddhism, the non-mythical presentation of the Buddha's teaching came first. The more mythical came later. The great advantage of keeping myth is that so many of one's deeper feelings and emotions are bound up with it so if one keeps hold of the myth, even though one allegorizes it, and gives it a deeper philosophical meaning, one takes the feelings associated with that, along with one, or up with one, into one's higher religious consciousness. That seems to be very important.

Abhaya: So what are you saying would be the function of the myth in its crude form, - I'm not quite sure?

S.: Well, its function is explanation. There are various theories. Some scholars, I believe, distinguish between two kinds of myths: they distinguish between 'cosmic myth' and 'culture myth'. A 'cosmic myth' is a myth that tries to account for the origins of things - the origins of the world, the gods, human beings and so on. Even the weather. 'Culture myths' are myths that try to account for the origins of certain customs and practices and observances. What we would call religious observances. In a sense, a myth is an attempt at explanation. In its own way, it is sort of scientific, because it tries to say, well, this happens for such and such reasons. But it isn't scientific explanation in the modern sense of the term. Eventually you could discredit it. But all the sort of poetic associations that have woven themselves around it, can be preserved if it's interpreted allegorically. In poetry we still speak of the sun rising in the East, though we know quite well that it doesn't rise.

Subhuti: Sagaramati has a question on individual stream of consciousness.

Sagaramati: What is the relation between the ages of man and the individual stream of consciousness? Do new individual streams emerge which had no previous individual existence or do these individual streams come from a sort of reservoir of consciousness or conscious stuff? Are these streams always psychically individualized as separate...?

S.: Well, the Buddha did say that if one tries to understand the workings of Karma in all its details one would become mad'. (Laughter) There is of course, the point - the Buddha does say somewhere else, that Samsara is beginningless. So in a sense, streams of consciousness are beginningless too, because in a sense, streams of consciousness are Samsara - the same as consciousness is Samsara. It's usually of course, held that during those periods when there is no evolution of the universe, that is of the particular universe to which one belongs - all those streams of consciousness which have not attained emancipation are gathered together in a higher world - in a Brahmaloaka. And that as the world re-evolves, the cosmos, the universe re-evolves, - they, so to speak, reincarnate and they again go through the process of birth and death and rebirth for a whole cosmic period. And if they don't during that cosmic

period attain emancipation, then at the further sort of folding up of the cosmos, they again are withdrawn so to speak, into a higher Brahmaloaka. But no ultimate beginning of those streams of consciousness can be seen. Whether there's actually a finite number of them is difficult to say - whether one is to think of them as literally, different streams, again is difficult to say. I sometimes used the image of 'refraction'. One can't literally think in terms of a soul - stuff which divides into different streams or into different entities. The image of refraction speaks in terms of one moon reflected in a number of different pots of water. So as soon as there is another pot of water, there is another refraction. That is only of course, a poetic image, but perhaps it helps one to understand what takes place. This is something again which requires quite a lot more thought than I've been able to give to it. It's another part of the old question: 'well what about population explosion?' whatever is meant by that. 'Where do all the souls come from?' I think the question cannot really be formulated in those sorts of terms. Because one is speaking of the soul as though it is a discreet sort of entity. Is it? Can we speak of mind, can we speak of consciousness, stream of consciousness, even, in that sort of way? Because to speak of a stream of consciousness suggests that you can, but can one?

Sagaramati: In the teaching of (karm& there is some individual continuity.

S.: Yes, indeed, yes. If one takes all that literally, well it would almost suggest that there's a finite number, though a very high number indeed of streams of consciousness.

Sagaramati: Someone has mentioned that you had mentioned that maybe the individual consciousness can split?

S.: But again, that's just a sort of way of looking at it. That would assume that it is a sort of entity. But perhaps it can, in a manner of speaking. But again perhaps the image of refraction, says much the same thing, perhaps in a better way. It's not a literal splitting, it's perhaps an apparent splitting as in the case of the reflection of a single moon say, in a number of different pots of water.

Ratnaprabha: Did you say reflection or refraction?

S.: I said refraction to begin with and reflection when I spoke of the pots of water, but there is a difference isn't there, technically between refraction and reflection?

Ratnaprabha: Refraction is the bending of a beam of light, when it enters a denser medium.

S.: It's probably not possible to confine in a single image, but in a way, both happen because the beam is, as it were, bent. There's not a sort of straight-forward refraction. There's an element of distortion also. Yes, pending - awaiting further reflection. (Chuckles)

Subhuti: Kulamitra on continuous production of 'new men

Kulamitra: Yes. There's a few questions in this one, actually. Since the Axial Age has produced such a large number of outstanding individuals why has civilization not produced more and more

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outstanding individuals since then? If the impact of all these 'new men' failed to totally transform their society; Les, is there any hope of us doing so now? And does this mean that from a spiritual point of view, things have been slipping backwards since the Axial Age?

S.: Let's have that question clause by clause.. that's what we were having to do in Tuscany where sometimes questions had 24 clauses. (Laughter)

Kulamitra: Since the Axial Age produced such a large number of outstanding individuals, why has civilization not produced more and more outstanding individuals?

S.: Ah, yes.' This really is to raise the question, under what conditions are outstanding individuals produced? Not that the conditions will produce them automatically, because after all, an individual is an individual, but certainly it would ~seem that some conditions are more favourable to the production of individuals than others. Let's think, first of all in ordinary cultural terms. If we look at, say, European history, is there any period when we can say, that outstanding individuals tended to appear in unusually large numbers? in particular areas. Can anybody offer any suggestions?

Kuladeva: There's the Renaissance in Italy then later on, the composers in Germany.

S.: Yes, there's the Renaissance in Italy, composers in Germany - Is there any sort of common factors say, between the conditions under which they appeared and the conditions under which at least the Greek new men appeared?

Subhuti: The most obvious thing is the small states. There were many small states.

S.: Yes. The small states, yes. Of course, one also had similar conditions in the Buddha's day. The Buddha himself was the product, so to speak, of a very small state. So it would seem that a small and therefore, intense, sort of civic life is one of the predisposing factors. It would also seem that wealth is a predisposing factor. Maybe I should say, prosperity, surplus wealth - surplus energy therefore. Leisure and so on. One almost certainly had that in the cities of northern Italy didn't one? During the Renaissance period and of course in the Low Countries and in parts of Germany where business was very active, and vigorous.

Ratnaguna: Why should small states help in the production of new men?

S.: Well, as I said, it would seem that a more intense civic and public life is possible. Everybody knows everybody else. There's a very intense interaction. And that would seem to have a very stimulating effect on the individual. Also the individual can play a part. He's not lost in some vast anonymous mass.

Subhuti: There's also a certain amount of rivalry between states so that the rulers were willing to lavish money on cultural and artistic activities.

S.: Yes, indeed. Yes, often in the case of the Italian cities, that went to extremes and sometimes they destroyed one another.

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It's strange that even during their wars, the artistic product-ivity continued. It is quite interesting - I've been reading a little bit about the Renaissance recently - that here were these cities in Northern Italy precariously balanced between the Papacy on the one hand and the German Emperor on the other and each were trying to bring them under control and they would try to play off the one against the other and preserve their precious independence and they did that for several hundred years. So yes, it would seem that great Empires tend not to produce great individuals. It's the smaller communities with their more intense civic life, with their rivalries - rivalries between one city-state or one small state and another. Yes, that's quite interesting, isn't it? There needs to be scope for the individual. Also there was very intense civic pride among the Italians - the Italians of the northern cities during the Renaissance. They're very proud of their cities, sometimes almost insanely proud of their cities. And yes, the Greeks had that too. So these would seem to be some of the factors. I've also sometimes thought that in the case of the FWBO, taking it as our movement, well, it's almost like a little state within a state though we are of course, subject to the control of a larger state to a great extent - but people do live their lives more and more just within the FWBO. So it does seem to have quite an intense internal life of its own and I think that is quite stimulating, at least for some people. It must be a life of its own and it mustn't just be a section of the fringe of the greater society. (Pause) We've talked about Italy and Germany and so on and Greece, but there are other areas where I have been conscious of many many individuals having been produced. That is within the Sufi tradition. In reading about that, one gets the impression of an astonishing richness. I'm not quite what were the predisposing conditions there. But it would ~as though it were a very very rich and vigorous tradition indeed, for many hundreds of years, almost down to the present itself. Probably outside the Buddhist movements, the most vigorous or has been the most vigorous spiritual tradition, that of Sufism. There's so many hundreds of great teachers and masters and remarkable men of various kinds. Again, something of this I think was due to the submerged influence of Buddhism. Sometimes not so submerged. One is reminded of the Chan and Zen schools and the Tantric schools in Tibet. There were so many masters and teachers and so on. I must say, this doesn't quite fit in with FWBO ideology at present - I must say it is remarkable in the case of the Sufis, how many ~amous fathers had famous Sufi sons and grand- sons. It seemed to run in whole families. This is quite an interesting point. You never hear any reference to mothers and sisters or hardly ever - but you find that such and such great master had five sons and they all seem to have been great masters in their turn, generation after generation. So perhaps one can't altogether exclude the family influence. Do you see what I mean? That can under certain conditions constitute a sort of more intense atmosphere. Even say, in Victorian England, there were whole families of well-known clergymen. Father, son - I was going to say Holy Ghost (Laughter) - but grandson. Yes, and certainly the family of the Huxleys, the Golthams and the Stephens and all the rest of them. (Pause) One often finds that a certain Sufi master teaches his son the Koran and religious law and mathematics and astronomy and they're sent off to somebody else to learn theology and mysticism. By the time they're about 20, all his sons are ascetics and well-advanced in meditation and so on and so forth. Meanwhile in the lives of the Sufis, more often than not, there's no refer-

ence to them actually having been married - it just took place sort of automatically. It wasW't anything that one gave any thought to or bothered about. And in due course, the sons come along and of course, they are at once enrolled among the master's disciples and were helped accordingly. It's a quite sort of interesting picture, in a way. The fact that the women are so much in the background is of course, due to the Islamic tradition itself. Women were just not in evidence in social life so there's hardly any question of young men being tempted away from the true path or anything like that. Also I noticed that despite the very anti-aescetic attitude of Islam, many Sufis did in fact, remain celibate, though there was no obligation on them to do so at all from their exoteric religion.

Vairocana: Is it not true that Orthodox Islam doesn't consider Sufis to be Moslems?

S.: Well it depends on what one means by Orthodox Moslems, because there are many Sufis who are or consider themselves to be quite Orthodox Moslems. Strictly speaking an Orthodox Moslem is one who observes the (Shariat?) - the religious law and many Sufis, not to say the majority, did. Though there were some wilder specimens who didn't - who flouted the religious law and even orthodox theology and who suffered for it - who were even killed. But many Sufis were much more cautious and didn't publicly flout the official Islamic teaching. Some Sufis were authorities on Islamic law for instance or even were mathematicians and so on. I think one of the things that one doesn't often realize in the West is the extent to which Islamic civilization inherited the civilization of Greece, to a much greater extent than did the civilization of the Christian West, until the Renaissance. At the time of the Renaissance there was a great eruption of Classical influence, but that Classical influence was with Islam, almost from the beginning. They didn't have a Renaissance for that reason. They were familiar with Plato and Aristotle and Plotinus and so on from the very beginning. They were not so familiar with - it would seem deliberately not familiar with - the poets. It seems they deliberately did not study them. They could have done but they didn't. Presumably because there was so much of what they regarded as idol worship mixed up with that. But the philosophers and theologians and scientists and medical writers were well-known to the Arabs from the earliest times of Islam.

Kulamitra: The second part was, if the impact of all those new men failed to totally transform their societies, is there any hope of us doing so now?

S.: I think one has to be v~y careful how one uses the expression 'impact', because you can't~people to evolve. You can only persuade them.

(End of Tape 2)

S: But you cannot make them be new men. So you can't really argue much less still predict, well that you have got so many new men so therefore after a hundred years you ought to have so-many more. We don't ourselves find things working out in that way. We haven't yet entered a period of exponential growth have we ? We haven't yet discovered our 100th monkey. Or if we have, he is having his effects somewhere else in the world not within our own immediate environment. (pause)

Kulamitra: So would you say that the chances of transforming our society are as good or as bad as ever ?

S: In terms of probability it does of course depend on conditions Conditions do play some part, though they are not decisive. They can either be helpful or not helpful, supportive or obstructive. It is very difficult to say. I am conscious of the fact that quite a lot of new people are getting involved these days. I keep meeting new people. I meet them off retreats usually, or they write to me. There seem to be more coming in than before. I am not sure whether it is just more in absolute terms or whether the actual rate of intake of new people is increasing. Maybe people around Centres would be in a better position to say. I am conscious of it especially in connection with the L.B.C. Perhaps to some extent in the case of Manchester, even Glasgow. But we do seem to be having quite a lot of new people coming in, that is to say there seems to be quite a lot of people popping up, or coming to see me, or writing to me saying "I have been around a year now, or six months over a year and a half, and I am really appreciating the FWBO, I am really going to get well into it" and in some cases asking me for Ordination. We have now got men now who have asked for ordination, a list of about eighty. It does of course include a few who have probably forgotten all about their request. But that is quite a lot of people isn't it ? And the sort of people who are coming along and eventually introducing themselves in this way seem more and more positive, bright and healthy. They are not the semi-neurotic sort of people that we tended to get quite a lot of only a few years ago. They don't seem to have any great problems. Their only great problem was that they hadn't met anything like the FWBO so far. It really does seem that going out, advertising, and having strategic publicity really pays. And also one needs to get around oneself a bit and to make as many human contacts as you can.

Tejamitra: But we are still extremely thin on the ground, when you look at the population.

S: Oh yes, of course. But what does one expect in a way ? Because we are thinking in terms of the individual. And we do know that there quite a number of movements, some of them labelled religious, which attract far more people than we do, but I think that they attract them for the very reasons that we would not wish to attract people. The fact that we do try to appeal to the individual quite genuinely, and speak in terms of individual development means that we are limiting our appeal to those who are able to develop, or at least capable of thinking in those terms; People who are not just looking for a group, not just looking for something that they can believe in, and almost blindly follow, and identify with. Well we don't offer that sort of thing. So it is quite a big task in a way that we have set ourselves. Because we are just adding one person to

another, one individual to another in a way. We are never going to be a mass movement. We may have a lot of individuals, we may even have tens of thousands of them say in this country. They might have a strong levelling influence on the whole population. But you aren't going to enlist millions of individuals within a matter of months or years. It is going to be a very slow process, by its very nature. But perhaps we should be on the look out for the sort of conditions under which the individual tends to emerge, or is more likely to emerge, or the sort of situations within which he is more likely to emerge. We know for instance that single-sex communities can be very productive of individuals. I mean for instance if one thinks of the very early days, that little community was it Number Three, Belmont Street? How many Order Members did that produce? Mainly under Lokamitra's auspices. I think someone once counted up fourteen, or was it eighteen, it might have been. But certainly out of all proportion to the size etc of the place. But it was our leading inens community then, perhaps our only one.

Sagaramati: That is because nobody stayed there very long. (laughter)

S: But they didn't have to get ordained in order to leave. (laughter) Sagaramati: I think some of them left because they wanted to be ordained (laughter)

S: And then there is the ... what was it called? which afterwards became Amaravati.

Voices: Vajrasamaya

S: I believe everybody that was there was there was ordained with one exception. So it would seem that at least men's single-sex communities are almost sort of, I was going to say forcing houses, but that is not quite the right term, maybe hot houses, no that is probably not quite the right term either. Hot house suggests sort of comfort and warmth.

: Incubator?

S: Incubators? That suggests little chicks popping out, yes, maybe incubators. Quite a Buddhistic image, you know the Bodhi-sattva is compared to chick within the egg.

Tejamitra: Lokagesta.

S: Yes, just as the chick goes, "cheep, cheep" within the shell, so the Bodhisattva even before he becomes a real Bodhisattva is speaking about Sunyata (much laughter). He utters the cry of Sunyata.

Kulamitra: Could I just then follow with the last point which I think now does definitely follow on, the question was, Does this mean that from a spiritual point of view things have

been slipping backwards since the Axial Age ?

S: Well it is very difficult to say. Because one cannot really quantify individuals or treat them statistically. But one might say if there was a basis of comparison it could only be found in the relative number of individuals to the total population. I don't know whether we have got any of the necessary information

to go by. I don't think we can conclude one way or the other.

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After all there will be a lot that are not known to history and for whom there is no record. Anyway let's carry on. No, just a moment, can we draw any sort of general conclusion from all that, say relative to the movement as a whole ?

Kulamitra: I had one thought, which is that, you mentioned that there are a lot of people coming through the LBC now, I was thinking well in a way it is beginning to get the size of a small city state, there is that... a lot of people interacting in a very small area.

S: Well, village.

Kulamitra: I think getting to a certain size does help to attract more people.

S: Oh yes, I think it does. People, rightly or wrongly, feel a certain confidence in something that has achieved a certain size, and which they can see isn't merely big. Of course the disadvantage within a larger organisation or larger movement is that the bigger it is the more people can find as it were comfortable niches. And you have to be very careful and try to sort of shake them out of those comfortable niches from time to time. O.K.

Subhuti: Ratnaprabha had a question about your statement about that list summarising three quarters of human cultural achievement.

~li~~~rabha: Yes you gave a list of names of great men of the Axial age and you said something like, these names summarise three quarters of all the higher culture of humanity. I wonder if you would go into this and say whether it implies that the Axial Age was a sort of golden age of culture compared with more recent ages.

S: I think that is rather difficult to say, perhaps that should be qualified a bit. I think we have to be quite careful not to look at things too exclusively in terms of Western Culture. These names loom rather large in our consciousness. But say how large do they loom in the consciousness of the Chinese ? I am not speaking about sort of modern Maoist Chinese, but someone within the Chinese cultural tradition. So I think in absolute terms that is saying probably quite a lot, perhaps too much. But on the other hand, at least until recently, the

West has been very very important, I mean Europe, in the evolution and development, the history of the whole world. And those Greek thinkers played a part in the development of European thought. Not to speak of Islam as I mentioned. So perhaps their influence does in fact reach the whole world. You could say that Plato and Aristotle through European civilisation, European thought, not excluding people like Marx have influenced the whole world. I mean the notion of democracy has influenced the world world, where does that come from, it doesn't just come from England, its roots go right back into the Classical period. So many of our modern ideas which are now, I say modern Western ideas, which are now influencing many parts of the world. Whereas could you say even a figure like Confucius has influenced the world in that sort of way to that sort of extent. So it is not easy; I mean yes I think I must say that we have to be very careful not to see things too much within the Western European cultural perspective, but nonetheless, those figures from Ancient

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Greece, especially, do seem tremendously important in the long run for the whole world through their influence on European culture and thought.

Ratnaprabha: So the sort of lines of thought that they initiated which are important rather than necessarily their own individual contributions to culture specifically.

S: Yes their legacy, as it were, or what was subsequently made of that legacy, the impulse that they gave to thought.

Ratnaprabha: And that figure of three quarters, when you were referring to these figures plus all their 'legatees'.

S: I think strictly speaking one cannot speak in terms of three quarters; one is just trying to say how, to emphasise how great their influence was. I think if I was to write out that particular list, I wouldn't keep that expression. I mean for instance Marx is tremendously important and influential isn't he? All right what are the influences that are at work on Marx? Well perhaps there is Jewish-Messianism, a strong element of that, goes back to Judaism. There is a strong influence of Hegel, all right, but what influenced Hegel, well Hegel was influenced by practically the whole course of Western thought before him, but he had a very very great admiration for Greek civilisation and culture, very great indeed. And perhaps he is in the direct line of descent from Aristotle. So one could say that through Hegel well practically the whole course of philosophy in the West influences Marx even. Then again Marx was influenced by the English writers on Economics, by Ricardo, by Adam Smith. Also influenced by the earlier Socialist thinkers and they perhaps were influenced by Rousseau and the whole Enlightenment movement. And they in some ways look back to Classical Antiquity. So it does seem that Greek thought in a very general way is very important in its consequences for the whole of the modern world. I mean the very terminology in which we discuss so many departments of life and thought come directly from the Greeks. Language and thought are obviously closely connected.

Subhuti: The list that is being referred to is a list of all the figures of the Axial Age of all the different geographical areas. You seem to be talking about this in a specific...

S: Ah, I thought that that was what was meant, just from the Classical period.

Subhuti: No, no, From Confucius to...

S: In that case I'd say my three quarters fraction, probably, even though that is absurd taken literally, yes, is not far from the truth, if you take the spirit of it. Yes, for instance to give an example, Whitehead is supposed to have said that the whole of philosophy in the West is simply a series of footnotes to Plato. Well that just illustrates that sort of point.

Ratnaprabha: So does the fact that so much of our culture originates in the Axial Age imply that there has not been much sort of originality since then, or is it just that they came up with

all the ideas then, and so there are no more ideas to come up with!

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S: Yes, I think it is more like that. There are certain things that are done once and for all. I mean in the same way, I don't think you could found a world religion in the Twentieth Century I don't think it is possible. It is as though the time of founding world religions was then. A little bit later as with Christianity and Islam. But it would seem that when you have got a limited number of say world religions, well they are already occupy the whole field, the conditions are different. You can have some other sort of movement, maybe a movement of synthesis or an anti-religious movement, as say in the case of Marxism. But you hardly now found a world religion I think again within a short time, I mean perhaps with scores or hundreds of millions of followers. It is as though Humanity is too deeply set in its ways from that sort of point of view. So some things are done as it were once and for all. And when the time for doing them so to speak has passed well it is not possible to do them again. You can try, or you can sort of imitate in a sort of artificial way but it is not the real thing. It is as though the possibilities have been exhausted.

Sagaramati: Isn't the history of Buddhism complete with quite new and well radical ideas emerging ?

S: Yes but it doesn't constitute the founding of a new religion.

Sagaramati: No.

Padmavaira: It is a re-statement of...

S: In a way it is a re-statement of fundamentals, but in a very different context, from a very different point of view. In the same way there have been vast changes in every world religion, not only in time but as it has spread from one part of the world to the other.

Sagaramati: But wouldn't be sort of possible for within that movement, say within the Buddhist movement, to find something that has got a real world message, that would appear

to other people as something quite, even distinct from Buddhism ?

S: Well it would depend to some extent on what peoples' ideas of Buddhism were. Because sometimes a movement that regards itself as a return to the origins of the particular religion it is connected with, is regarded by others following that same religion as an absolute heresy. We find this say with the case of protestanism vis a vis Catholicism. You know the Catholics regard the Protestants as, I think they are not exactly heretics, but at best seperated brethren they call them. But they certainly don't regard them, in a sense, well not real Christians, but full Christians. But the Protestants certainly in the early days regarded themselves as returning to the purity of the Gospels and clearing away all the corruptions and accretions introduced by the Catholic Church. But that point of view was not acceptable to the Catholic Church. In the same way, the Eastern Orthodox Church regards the whole of Western Christianity, especially Catholicism as an abberation, and as a betrayal of the Gospel. In fact originally Catholicism which is now the biggest single branch of Christianity was a small weak Western off-shoot of what was essentially an Eastern and Byzantine phenomenon. It was culturally weak and backward and politically not very powerfull, and didn't have much cultural prestige, not in comparison with the Eastern Orthodox Church, or

what we now call that.

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Kuladeva: Is that due to the collapse of the Western Roman Empire ?

S: Well yes, it was due to the collapse of the Western Roman Empire and of course eventually the Papacy joined forces with the German Empire, and built itself up in that particular way and consolidated its own position politically. Mean-while the Eastern Orthodox Church and Byzantian Empire gradually succumbed to the Muslims. And in the end the Catholic Ohnrch was left practically in possession of the field. Except for Russia, which didn't really count in European politics and culture until very much later. So we mustn't forget that what we regard as the main branch of Christianity, that is to say Catholicism, from a broader point of view is the rump! But the greater part of the body of Christianity in the East has of course, except for isolated pockets, become Muslim. So we have to bear all these sort of facts in mind. Just as we have to bear in mind that Central Asia was once Buddhist. It was Bud-dhist for many hundreds of years and Buddhism was in a very flourishing state there for many hundreds of years. It is difficult to imagine that now. That there were great kingdoms throughout Central Asia, all of them Buddhist, monastries with thousands of monks, great Pagodas and Stupas all over Central Asia, but partly due to Muslim invasions and con- versions and partly due to climatic conditions they were all just lost. Anyway any more questions ?

Subhuti: We have got quite a few more, actually. What do you want to do ?

S: We will carry onto 9.30, no later. If we do have any more left over, we will carry them over until tomorrow.

Sagaramati: In the examples you give of the New Men, arising in Greece, India, China etc, I personally find it difficult to accept the Prophets as New Men. Because there is something to me quite fanatical about prophets in that area of the world, which comes down to the present day. So in what sense would a prophet be a New Man ?

S: I think here two questions arise. One is what exactly one means by New Man, and two what one means by prophet ? I don't want to give the impression, I hope I haven't given the impression that New Man is something very fixed and defined and definite. It covers a whole range of human phenomena, a whole range of human development, and some New Men are newer than others as it were. You may well put the Prophet pretty well down, even doubt whether he is a New Man at all. But then what does one mean by Prophet ? Usually a prophet was understood to mean someone who spoke out about the existing state of affairs in human life and human society from a higher ethical and spiritual point of view. And this certainly the great prophets did, for instance the second Isaiah, Amos, and Jeremiah. Whether all the prophets did, well that is quite another matter. But probably at least the great ones did, at least sometimes. I think one perhaps would have to read through the prophets, because we only have the prophetic books as our sources of information about them, and ask oneself, preferably reading them in a modern translation, so as not to be hypnotised

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by the poetry, ask oneself well what sort of impression they really do produce, sometimes it is very mixed. I mean a few days ago I was looking into one of the Apocryphal books, The Wisdom of Solomon, there was something that I wanted to look up in that. Some passages there are really quite sublime, and a Buddhist could subscribe to, but others were just not acceptable, at all, it is clearly a sort of composite work. I have not looked it up anywhere to find out exactly how The Wisdom of Solomon developed or how the text was built up, but I strongly suspect that it must be a composite work, the tone is so different in different places. So one might even find this in the case of the Prophetic Books. For instance traditionally there is just supposed to be one Isaiah, but modern scholars regard the author of the second Isaiah, Isaiah Two, as a quite different and later personality than Isaiah One. Maybe even within Isaiah Two there different sorts of strata. But certainly the best of Isaiah one might say, Isaiah Two, would seem to be the voice of a prophet in the sense of someone who is a New Man, at least to some extent.

Sagaramati: I was thinking of say a modern example, I have been reading about Mohammed. He is seen as a prophet, and in this lineage of prophets, but...

S: Mohammed is seen as the prophet, he is known as the seal of the prophets. His sort of prophetic function guarantees that of all the others, according to Islamic thought.

Sagaramati: It is hard to look upon, from what I have read, Mohammed as a New Man. It sounds like somebody who is deeply disturbed.

S: One has to be quite careful what is one's standards of evaluation. One of the things that has disturbed most Western commentators is his sex-life. Which some Muslim commentators, modern ones, try to explain away. But it does seem that the majority of his wives were actually widows of fellow Muslims, who had been slain in battle, and who he just took into his tent to look after, so as to establish a legal connection or right, he just married them out of hand. But nonetheless he does seem to have been, by Buddhist standards sort of overattached to his youngest and favourite wife. So from a Buddhist point of view, well let's say Theravada point of view, he wasn't quite perfect. But on the other hand according to the Pali texts themselves, you can be a householder, you can be a layman, and presumably engaging in sexual relations and become a stream entrant, and even become a once returner and even become a non-returner, though not an Arahant. So you can get quite far whilst still being a married man and even presumably polygamous. So if one was to press it, all right, if you can still become a Stream Entrant with one wife, which seems to be pretty clear, can you become a Stream Entrant while married to two wives? (laughter) All right three?, where must you actually stop? And also what does one mean by married? One particular person could be more married to his one wife than somebody else was to his ten wives. So one has to be very careful exactly how one evaluates, one cannot just sort of~jump to conclusions.

Sagaramati: I was thinking more in terms.. when he used to have the prophetic utterances etc, he used to, apparently, go into

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a seizure and...

S: Well some modern authorities have held that Mohammed was epileptic. Epilepsy was of course known to the Greeks as a sacred disease, wasn't it? But again on the other hand, you may have sometimes some people who have as it were abnormal experiences, which are abnormal in a quite positive sense, but which do produce a great deal of strain on the organism, and might give rise to all sorts of symptoms. That wouldn't be a straight-forward case of some kind of mental illness or disease.

Sagaramati: Could one go and slay people? which is apparently what he used to do.

S: Well from a Buddhist point of view, definitely no. From a Buddhist point of view that is the biggest question mark, not only against Mohammed, but against the whole of Orthodox

Islam. Even the attitude of some Sufis seems very strange. There was one great Sufi Master, I was reading about, he is described as a great Sufi Master, and judging by his sayings he is a great Sufi Master, but he decided when he was an old man to go and die fighting the non-Muslims and he did, he died in battle. So from a Buddhist point of view, this is very strange indeed, and hardly acceptable.

Sagaramati: The concept, well it ties in with this, the concept of martyrdom. Even in Iran today, thousands have died

S: Well in the case of Iran it is a little different, because they are Shi-ites, and they have a view that is different from that of the majority of Muslims, they almost invite Martyrdom.

Sagaramati: It was quite like say in the earlier stages of Christianity.

S: Oh yes indeed, people seem to have a mania for becoming martyrs. But then in a way if you really did believe that that was the gateway to eternal life, well why not? You see it was logical, in a way, given that belief.

Sagaramati: I associate that belief with a sort of fanaticism that seems to hover around that area. You don't get it in Greece, you don't get it in India, you don't get it in China. It seems to hover around this area.

S: I am not sure about your not getting it in China. The Chinese can be very fanatical people.

Padmavaira: What about the Indian ascetics?

S: Yes, the British suppressed a lot of these more extreme Hindu practices, what about the people who used to throw themselves under the car of (Jugarnath?) and be crushed to death before the British stopped them doing it? And what about women who committed sati in the belief that they would go straight to heaven and join their husbands? What about even the Vietnamese monks who burnt themselves to death? And there have been monks in China who have burnt themselves in that way throughout the history of Chinese Buddhism. The Vietnamese monks had many precedents, going right back to the Lotus Sutra itself. Many historical precedents too.

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Sagaramati: But in that area it is 'whole-sale'. These are individual instances, but there is ... I mean the cemetery in Tehran has now got 400,000 martyrs in it. This is only in the last 20 years. (laughter)

S: Well a Shi-ite would probably regard that as constituting a sort of proof of the truth of Islam. But really it is quite pitiable for young boys just being sent by their mothers even to die in this way, in the belief that a martyr for Islam goes straight to heaven.

Kulamitra: But when you enumerate these New Men, you are not actually saying that all future developments of that particular stream of thought is sort of exonerated from negative things, are you if you see what I mean ?

S: No, one of the things I was going to say was that our human nature is very mixed and sometimes even one has to make an over- all assesement. With regard to the Buddha himself, some of the gualities that we regard as say as virtues, might be regarded by followers of some other religions as not virtues at all. So I think we have to be careful in a way to be fair and make all- owances for circumstance and a different way of looking of things. But I must say in the case of violence this is something that I find quite impossible to reconcile myself to, say in the case of Islam or Christianity, however much I sort of try to stretch my broad-mindedness. That seems to be a sort of sticking point. I don't find too much difficulty in over-looking all those wives, but the battles, the actual fighting seems much more difficult to overlook. Anyway it is nine-thirty, perhaps we'll stop there.

Subhuti: We have got some questions left over from yesterday.

S: Ah, yes, we had better deal with those first I think.

Subhuti: You speak of four segments of human history, are the four segments arranged hierarchicallv ? S6 in what sense is the fourth Age an advance on the third, that is the Age of Science ? There is a gap between the end of the Axial Age, which ends at two hundred B.C and the beginning of the Age of Science, which begins circa 1500 A.D. or rather C.E., what are the characteristics of that intervening age ?

S: Ah yes let's take that clause by clause Subhuti:"Are the four segments arranged hierarch~ically ?"

S: Yes and no, depending upon the principle of the hierarchy is. I think in terms of the general evolution of consciousness there is no hierarchy at all. That is to say humanity as a whole has reached a certain level of consciousness with the emergence of Homo sapiens, and it is very doubtful to say the least whether humanity as a whole has arisen above that level, it is only out- standing individuals who have risen above that level. So there isn't a straight forward hierarchy as between these four main periods. There is certainly a hierarchy as regards the progress of what one may call civilisation, there is progress in respect

of the amenities of civilisation, there is progress with regards say to the standard of living, the Arts and the Sciences. But whether these represent, or whether these are tantamount to a rise in the level of consciousness that is quite a different matter obviously. Nonetheless it isn't quite straight-forward even as that, because the fact that true individuals do arise from the time of the Axial Age onwards especially has some effect on the general level of consciousness, but I think it is so slight on the whole that one cannot really use that as a basis for making broad general distinctions of a hierarchical basis between these four different periods. The fact that during the third period New Men do appear doesn't lift the third and fourth periods generally to a higher level as regards the average level of consciousness. Though it may have and in fact does have some effect here and there as it were. So... carry on with the next clause.

Subhuti: "There is a gap between the end of the Axial Age, 200 BC and the beginning of the Age of Science 1500 CE."

S: Well I think that is covered by the fact that I say we have been living on the capital of the Axial Age right up to the time of the beginning of the Age of Science. That is really the continuation of the Axial Age, in the sense that during that period we live on that particular spiritual capital. Perhaps I didn't make that clear. So it is as though the Age of Science begins, or as a result of the beginning of the Age of Science that capital is in a way exhausted. We are no longer living on that capital, rightly or wrongly, we have thrown it away rather, not that the capital is exhausted, but that we have squandered it, or we don't value it any more perhaps.

Ratnaguna: Would you say that is when the Age of Science began when we began to squander the capital ...

S: Well they overlap, the Age of Science begins one might say in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries even, though it didn't really get under way until the seventeenth century, and in terms of technology until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the twentieth century, and of course many people in a general way or diluted way are still living on the capital inherited from the Axial Age, but in a very very much weakened form. So there is never any question of one Age abruptly ending and another abruptly beginning, there is a lot of overlap, and so which is cause and which is effect we cannot really say. We cannot say because Science began therefore Traditional Religion and Culture came to an end, and we cannot say because Traditional Religion and Culture petered out therefore the arise of Science began, it is not a simple cause effect relationship in either respect. There is a broad period of overlap with one type of civilisation so to speak becoming progressively weaker and the other progressively stronger.

Subhuti: You said as regards the general level there has been no overall development since Homo sapiens began, that means from the beginning of Primitive Man ?

S: I think I would probably need to think about it a bit more, but I think probably that one could say that. It is not an area

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where really much more than generalisation is possible. But, yes it is as though what has been achieved by the real individual becomes the actual possession, the effective possession of very very few people. On the other hand one would need to phrase that or to explain it quite carefully, it could perhaps be misunderstood. But after all that is not a very long time, what is the period we are agreed upon? Half a million years? I mean very great changes in the level of consciousness collectively do not take place within such a short period of time; it is in the case of the individual. It is not even such a simple question as that, because after all the mass is composed of potential individuals. So in a way~ the mass cannot rise above that mass level without becoming individuals, so it is as it were by very definition the level remains the same for the mass, because if anyone in that mass, any sort of individual in the statistical sense rises above that level, well he ceases to belong to the collectivity and becomes an individual at least to some extent. The level of general knowledge may rise, but that is quite another matter. The essential quality of consciousness does not change except in the case of those who actually rise above the level of collective or group consciousness.

Sagaramati: With the emergence of Self-consciousness you mention that true self-consciousness or a quality of self-consciousness has some degree of awareness of the transcendental. As in the hierarchy of consciousness there are still many levels ie dhyanas above self-consciousness in this sense, how can one be sure that one isn't just experiencing the influence of these higher mundane levels and not the transcendental level?

S: I am not sure in what sense I make that particular statement.

Subhuti: You talk about the qualities of the New Man, and the first quality is Awareness, and you talk about this awareness in the four areas of Self, Nature, Others, some awareness of Reality.

S: Ah, I get it. I would mean... I am aware that over the years I have not always used particular terms in exactly the same sense. I would say that in that particular passage, when I speak of awareness of Reality I am not speaking of awareness of Reality in the sense of real Insight with a capital I, in the transcendental sense, but more of an awareness of.. that there is such a dimension as the Transcendental, without there being any actual genuine liberating insight into that transcendental element itself. I think this is what I was trying to say. If I was to rewrite all that, say, I might recast all that completely and not put it quite in that way.

Ratnaguna: In the discussion that we had, I think we understood that, that it wasn't actually an Insight experience, it was a sense of it. But how do you know that it is a sense of the Transcendental, how do you know it is not just a sense of something higher, a higher state of

consciousness say ?

S~ Well if you agree that something is the mundane and then you have a sense of something high, well that is something which by definition is not the mundane, therefore it can only be the Transcendental. Though that is so to speak a quite abstract

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Knowledge, because that knowledge does not for you at that stage have any content. But at least you have a sort of formal awareness, one might say, of the Transcendental of that 'X' something or other which is not the mundane.

Ratnaguna: But wouldn't a higher stage of consciousness, a higher mundane state, like a dhyana, wouldn't you feel that that was something other, other than your mundane experience ?

S: No, because what I am getting at here is that you posit purely theoretically a Transcendental you negate the whole of your present experience, however far it goes and you say beyond even that there is something, I don't know what it is, I cannot give it a name, but it is non-whatever I am experiencing, if we call the whole of what I am experiencing as the Mundane then this is the Non-Mundane, you can call it the Transcendental. But it doesn't have an actual content at that stage because you have no actual experience of it. It is a purely formal notion, I mean by that, a purely logical postulate without any actual concrete content.

Sagaramati: It is not like Sraddha, which is definite feeling for the Transcendental.

S: No.... So you might say in a very general way the True Individual has got a sense of something beyond I think one shouldn't try to define it or bring it down too closely, but he has got a vague of feeling of something beyond, something that goes beyond all his present experience, something mysterious as it were in the Universe, which he cannot fathom or comprehend, it is no more than that really.

Padmavajra: So using the word transcendental to describe that one isn't speaking of it in the strict sense...

S: in the full, technical sense of the lokuttara, no.

Padmavajra: It is just that sense of beyond, which could.... would you include dhyana states ?

S: I think one must remember that when I gave these lectures to the audience that I was then addressing, many of these terms which I used have a much less precise significance than they have for people now. In those days people just didn't understand what the Transcendental exactly was, now they have got a much clearer idea, so one must remember that the people I was speaking to would just take the term Transcendental as just a vague sort of term for something altogether beyond. They wouldn't immediately think of the Lokuttara or the Asamskrta and try and work out what it meant in terms of Buddhist thought.

Ratnaguna: From simple sense-consciousness to rudimentary ego-consciousness is quite a step, if not even a leap, I wonder if you could say a few words about how you think it may have evolved ?

S: I think it is probably a topic on which one cannot really say a few words. I think it is probably a long and complex process in which all sorts of factors enter and on which various authorities have got all sorts of ideas. I think I would probably prefer not to say anything about that. I think if I was

to recast this material in book form, I think I would do quite

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would do quite a bit of reading up on Anthropology and so on, and also Child-Psychology. Perhaps one can most easily study these things in children, the way in which the sense consciousness of the child gradually becomes the rudimentary ego-consciousness. I don't know whether any parents here would like to offer a few comments, or anyone who has observed nephews and nieces. Has anyone ever studied this, it must be a very interesting process, and I am quite sure it must be for thoughtful or reflective parents one of the most interesting aspects of having children at all, if you are not too busy washing nappies and doing things like that. I must say personally if I get an opportunity I always sort of study children, especially very small ones, it is quite interesting.

Ratnaprabha: Could one get any clues from introspection, do you think, looking at one's own border line between self-consciousness and...

S: Well this raises the whole question of memory, if you mean going back into one's baby-hood...

Ratnaprabha: No, I meant more in one's present life, where it begins to fall away from self-consciousness and...

S: Well you could watch yourself when you get into a really infantile state (laughter) I think it is difficult, because your sometimes fully developed ego-consciousness is already there, so it would be rather difficult to actually study how the rudimentary ego-consciousness

came into existence for the first time in this life. I must say this is a topic on which I don't really have any thoughts at the moment. I suspect that I need to read up the relevant authorities and think about what they say and then relate that to the overall general framework. There is no reason somebody shouldn't do that reading up himself and maybe gather some material and even come to some conclusions.

Subhuti: The list of qualities of the New Man given in this lecture emphasises mainly his independence from the group, the qualities of co-operation and so forth are not included, was this exclusion intentional and would you care to give a fuller list now ?

S: Well I have given a fuller list, in fact I have been adding to the list all the time, haven't I? I think to some extent the qualities that I enumerated reflected the situation of people at that time. It did seem that a lot of people that I was in contact with, who were coming along to the lectures and the Centre, were in the process of extricating themselves from the group, and of course we had nothing for them to belong to, we did have the rudiments of an Order, but it was really no more than the rudiments, so I think for many people to be an individual meant primarily to struggle to get free from the group, the family group, the work group, the social group and class and so on. So I think the list of qualities which I drew up was to some extent the product of the gradual evolution of people in the movement itself, as people became more genuinely individual different qualities started emerging, or perhaps the need for certain qualities started emerging. Because for instance when we did have a properly developed Movement, an Order and Co-ops and Centres, then it eventually became obvious that some people who had in a sense emancipated themselves from the group and

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had become individual to some extent, were not sufficiently functioning as individuals, they were~behaving within the spiritual community like people who were still trying to get away from the group, in other words they were functioning individualistically, they were unable to co-operate. So then the need for co-operation started being stressed. I mean at an earlier stage still, it was seen that people who had developed self-consciousness and awareness and had succeeded in detaching themselves from the group were lacking in emotional warmth. So emotional positivity was laid down as a quality of the individual. So one might say that the list of qualities of the True Individual has grown paripassu with the actual development of people within the FWBO. It wasn't a list that was drawn up complete in advance, except for the two or three very very obvious qualities of the individual, and no doubt more will be forthcoming.

Kuladeva: In the lecture you associate the Prometheian Age with reproduction, the River

Valley Society with production and the Axial Age with creativity, can you draw a clear distinction between productivity and creativity, given that the pre-Axial civilisations associated as they are with the development in arts, religions, introduction of the alphabet and the emergence of cities do seem to be quite a leap from the Primitive Promethean Age ?

S: It is difficult to draw a hard and fast distinction. Perhaps one should try to take extreme examples to make the difference clear. It is quite clear what reproduction means isn't it ? It is biological, it is the reproduction of the species. In this connection I have often thought there is quite a bit of misunderstanding about this around even nowadays, even Michhaditthis, because sometimes a birth of a child is spoken of in terms of being a very creative thing, especially by women, and there is even a theory that men started painting pictures and composing symphonies out of envy of the creativity of women who were producing children. To me that is absolute nonsense, because a woman does not even produce a child, strictly speaking, in the sense of not doing it as a result of her own volition and conscious effort. I mean she did contribute to the beginnings of the process, but after that she just sits back and lets Nature do the rest, it is no more creative really I suppose than breathing or digesting. So that is reproduction, and in a sense it is production, but it is certainly not creation, so that is by the way, though no doubt later on, perhaps, a slightly creative element does enter in when it comes to the bringing up of the child, especially as the child gets older and older, assuming you have as a parent a sort of creative element in you, well that may manifest in relation to the education of your child. That is a different matter. But all right, production. Well you might say there is production of food through agriculture, that is not reproduction, because you are not reproducing your own species, it is not an automatic process. It is something that requires a certain amount of thought, a certain amount of planning, a certain amount of directed activity, and as a result of that kind of work you produce something that is useful to you, you bring into existence something that you need. I So this I call production. You can produce food. You can produce weapons. You can produce

pots, but of course here you can see the beginnings of creativity of a quite rudimentary kind. This is why it becomes difficult to draw a hard and fast line. You might say in the case of agricultural production it is very difficult to see a creative element, it is purely productive. But there are other things which are productive to begin with, but which become the basis of a sort of creative development, for instance a house to begin with is just a sort of shed, just a sort of hut with no sort of aesthetic quality about it, perhaps, but that can become the basis of the art of architecture. But nonetheless one can see there is a difference between the productivity which you exhibit in connection with food and so on and the creativity that you exhibit in the case of the creation of artistic masterpieces or just ordinary works of art. It is as

though in the case of ordinary works of art, you can put more of yourself into it, it reflects more of yourself, it embodies more of your own thoughts and feelings and higher levels of consciousness and so on. In the case of when you reproduce, well there is nothing of that. When you just produce, well at first there is nothing of that, but there begins to be the potentiality for that, but in the case of artistic creation, that potentiality is fully developed or is developed to a very much higher extent. You could say production is useful, it doesn't necessarily reflect higher values. I think this can be gone into in far greater detail, and again if I was to write all this up, I would probably go into this in far greater detail. I think the basic differences are clear.

Subhuti: We pass on now to today's lecture, "Art and the Spiritual Life".

Ratnaprabha: I'm afraid I cannot remember exactly what it was, but I think it was just asking for a little more explanation of what you meant by value in that context, Production and new values.

S: Well perhaps I can give an example, it is just one that springs to mind from Italian Renaissance Art: for instance it is usually said with Giotto new values entered into Italian Art, especially Italian Painting. Giotto is supposed to have introduced, relatively speaking perhaps, human emotion. Before him there was the Mediaeval tradition, maybe dominated by earlier Byzantine influences, so that in depicting for instance a scene from the Gospel story, the individual emotions of the individual characters depicted was simply ignored. But it is as though Giotto tried to imagine what it would really have been like and what would those people actually have felt and feeling as they did, how would they have they looked, how would they have behaved, what would their gestures and expressions have been, and so for Giotto that element of human feeling and human emotion was very very important. So Giotto one might say introduced that new value into Art. Of course that begs the question as to whether it was really a higher value, but at least he introduced a value or that particular context was new. And probably what we really need to do is to go much more thoroughly into the question of what one means by value. Perhaps that is an irreducible thing, you say something is more valuable than another, but you are judging by a certain standard. I think when one just speaks of values as it were in the abstract, without saying what it is more or less valuable, one is referring to spiritual ideals. Or one is at least referring to human ideals. Again you notice the language is metaphorical, because some values are higher

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and others lower than others. But a value usually indicates something at which human beings as such ought to aim and something which in terms of human life has an effect of enhancing that life, and making it more worthwhile, more worth living for. Often it is said in classical philosophy, truth, beauty and goodness are the great values, the things for the sake of which everything else exists, the things that we really live for, the things that we should be

striving for, the things that we look up to, again more metaphorical speech. Values are those things by which everything else is judged so to speak. So when one speaks of new values in the evolutionary process, one is actually speaking of higher values. I think perhaps that I haven't always made that clear. But you can have a new value which is not necessarily a higher value, but merely a different value. And sometimes of course lower values can be new values within a particular context, like money for instance, as such, wealth as such, suddenly becoming of great value at the time of the rise of Capitalism one might say. So a new value which is simply new is not necessarily a higher value in overall evolutionary terms, perhaps that needs to be made clear. Otherwise you are in the anomalous position of in fact saying "that whatever is later is better; Everything that is innovative is an improvement," but that is not necessarily the case, of course.

Sagaramati: Can taste rule out one's aesthetic an objectively genuine work of art i.e. one has sensibility and awareness to appreciate only particular expressions of certain level and not others. So are there any objective criteria for judging whether a work of art is an expression of a higher level of consciousness or not?

S: Yes and no. I think it is very difficult to formulate the difference in objective terms and to formulate it in such a way that the formulation carries immediate conviction to anybody who can understand the formulation theoretically. I think what one needs to do is to actually observe, to experience works of art and then actually see and experience for oneself that there is a difference between say this work of art and that. I think with practice you will eventually see that for instance one particular work of art is clearly the expression of a more refined sensibility than another work of art and usually you of course will say that the work of art which is the expression of the more refined sensibility to that extent is a better or a greater or a higher work of art, and no doubt in theory you should be able to arrange all the works of art that you experience in a sort of overall hierarchy. And I think one can also see that there are certain qualities that are possessed in a greater degree by the works at the top of your hierarchy than those at the bottom. But clearly in order to be able to do this, one must have a developed sensibility and if one is to appreciate works which are for the sake of argument are greater or higher, well your sensibility must be developed correspondingly to that level. I think if somebody's sensibility hasn't developed to that level it is practically impossible to convince them by theoretical arguments that that particular work of art is better. So it would seem to me that the arguments about whether this particular work is a work of art are pretty inconclusive. I have noticed in the course of

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my various question and answer sessions in different parts of the world, that this is one of the questions, one of the two or three questions which to regard with which people can get most heated and most upset. If you say, "well, I don't think that is a very great work of art", someone will be sure to jump up and say, "who are you say?", so I think one has to be very cautious about making such statements, even though they may be justified and valid. People almost feel that you are robbing them of their right to have an opinion or even to have an

experience, they can be very very reactive in this particular area.

Sagaramati: Could your, as it were, individual taste acutally exclude you from experiencing the value of certain works ?

S: Ah, I think you are using individual taste in an ambiguous way. You are using individual taste in the sense of your ecc- entric subjective taste, that is taste which is very personal to you as a very quirky sort of person (laughter), whereas if by individual taste you mean the taste of an individual, well it may have at present its limitations but in as much as that individual is trying to develop, he will also be trying to develop his sensitivity and sensibility. So I don't think there will be certain kinds of works of art that are permanently excluded from his appreciation, though he may well relegate them to a very low place, or he may even say, "well this is not actually a work of art". Because I mean your sensibility may be sufficiently developed and sufficiently catholic and cover a sufficiently wide range that you could be quite sure that you weren't rejecting that work of art as a work of art just because of the narrowness of your taste. You could say "it simply isn't a work of art, it doesn't have any of these sorts of qualities, it isn't genuine" and so on and so forth.

through~ Sagaramati: So if~your experience, say, you come to see that Bach or some works by Bach were the pinnacle as far as it could be expressed in music, does that mean to say that all people developing as individuals would one day come to experience Bach like that ?

S: I think there are several things to be borne in mind here. First of all there is the nature of the experience of Bach itself, which is perhaps more complex than we think. After all there are certain conventions with which one would have to familiarize oneself. I am thinking of say an Easterner and a Westerner, say maybe the mu .sic~l scale is different in the West from what it is in certain kinds of Eastern music So the ear of someone who was quite sensitive t~ let us say Indian classical music, would have to accustom itself to the different scale, accustom itself to things like harmony, which you don't get in Indian music, in the way that you do in Western music. But given all those points, I think yes, you could train yourself. I remember my own experience, I have touched on this in the cut first part of my memoirs. I remember my own experience when I first came to India, most of you know that I was in the Signals, and I was~a sort of radio-operator and what-not, so I often used to listen into Indian radio, when I should have been doing other work, and Indian music at first meant absolutely nothing to me, but I reasoned like this, I I well I have been able to appreciate Indian poetry in translat- ion and Indian music after all is produced by human beings, I

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should be able to appreciate it." And so I listened to it carefully and eventually after quite a long time I was able to appreciate it. And I started trying to do the same thing with Chinese music when I was in Singapore, though that was much more difficult. But I certainly ended up well able to appreciate Indian music. And there are lots of people in the West now who appreciate Indian music, though probably a hundred years ago it would have been regarded as absolutely outrageous and perhaps as not even music at all. So I think we can extend the range of our taste in this sort of way. And I think if we have this sort of developed taste, certainly to that developed taste some things will appear more highly developed and some things less highly developed, because your taste appreciates a certain quality. So when you acknowledge that there is such and such a quality inherent in such and such works~ it is also possible to think in terms of that same quality being present in a greater degree in a certain work and in a lesser degree in another work. So the fact that you appreciate art at all means the possibility of different degrees of appreciation and of even different degrees of art itself. Sometimes it may be very difficult on account of the difference of medium to say exactly where one work of art stands in relation to another. For instance how do you compare say a Bach Fugue with a Shakespeare Sonnet? It is very very difficult, if not impossible because the medium is so different, and even the kind of experience, even though both are aesthetic experiences. I do believe that...there are a lot of people nowadays in Japan, perhaps millions, who appreciate Western Classical Music, they have learnt over the last hundred years to appreciate, not only appreciate in fact, but to compose it, to conduct it, to perform it as well as Westerners. And this in a way is quite encouraging. And some Westerners perform Indian Classical music. But this is a very new thing. It is post-War. I remember when I was in Benares, there was an American learning the Sita, and this seemed at that time to people absolutely extraordinary and eccentric, but nobody would think anything of it now. Well every hippie used to have a Sita at least for a few months, didn't they?, well, the more well-to-do hippies anyway. (laughter) Little (taublas) were very popular at one time. Some of you older ex-hippies may remember them even.

Sagaramati: I know an Order Member who has still got a tabla.

S: Just for old time's sake, I'm sure. (laughter) Getting people up in the morning.

Abhaya: In the lecture you refer to the artist as genius and to the original meaning of genius as a higher guiding power or as one's guardian deity or as a higher self as quasi independent personality. Socrates refers to the intervention of his (daimon?) and artist in the Classical age and English poets, at least in the past, used to invoke these higher powers, the Muses. But they don't seem to do this nowadays, do you think this aspect of invocation is an important aspect, in that it indicates a sort of self-surrender to a higher power and in a way to acquiring perhaps the 'higher knowledge' you referred to on the first evening?

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S: Yes I think I would say that that is so. It is rather interesting for instance that Milton does invoke the higher powers in this sort of way, except that he specifically says that he is not invoking the Muses, but he is invoking the Holy Spirit to inspire him at the beginning of Paradise Lost. At the very beginning he says this, he says, "Sing Heavenly Muse, that on the secret top of Oreb or of Sinai didst inspire So clearly it is the Holy Spirit that inspired Moses and the Hebrew prophets. So Milton took the idea of inspiration quite seriously but transposed it from the classical Greek and Roman mode to the specifically Christian, and in fact invoked the Holy Spirit to inspire him. The same Holy Spirit is, he goes on to say, responsible for the Creation of the World. So Milton took this idea of inspiration very very seriously, it would seem that it wasn't just a literary device, he did actually feel in that way.

This whole question in a way epitomises the fact that in modern times the Arts have been divorced from, or removed from or torn out of their more traditional, for want of a better term, spiritual context. I think this is what it really indicates and no doubt it is regrettable that the whole of life is no longer lived within that larger, again for want of a better term spiritual cosmic framework. It is reflected in another sort of way in that we see Nature as something mechanical, whereas formally Nature was seen as full of Gods, and Goddesses or at least pixies and fairies.

Abhaya; I suppose in a Buddhist context it comes back when we say we are doing something to do with the arts, we can invoke the help of Manjusha.

S: yes, in India this tradition is still alive to some extent, because there is the Goddess Sarasvati, who in the later Buddhist Tantra is regarded as the consort of Manjusha. Normally Manjusha doesn't have a consort, but in some later Tantric developments, he has Sarasvati. In Hinduism, Sarasvati is the consort of Shakti of Brahma, the Creator, which is rather interesting. But the Sarasvati Puja which occurs in every autumn is a very very popular Puja all over India, and especially popular with students. There will be a big image of Sarasvati, very often a temporary clay image constructed in places like Calcutta and a special sort of shrine like a great booth set up and students will go and pray for success in examinations and so on, and often they will put their text books on the altar and keep them there for a day or two to get the blessing of Sarasvati. But it means that there is that sort of orientation, which is perhaps quite significant.

Abhaya: Do you think that this sort of orientation should be encouraged, for instance like with the artists in the Movement doing little 'artistic' pujas ?

S: Well you cannot do it in an artificial way. If you are saying a Thanka (a)~ you are well aware that in order to produce a really good thanka with feeling, you have got to have the requisite feeling, the corresponding feeling yourself. It is not enough to have technical expertise. You really ought to be well into your own meditation, ideally you ought to be doing the visualisation and Mantra recitation of that particular deity or Buddha or Bodhisattva so as to get a feeling for what that

particular figure represents, so that you can embody at least something of that in your painting. So I would say it would be not just a sort of invocation in an almost mechanical sense, but trying to actually to contact that particular source of inspiration in that way. It should be something which you actually feel, not just a formality that you go through. I was just trying to think whether there are any modern poets which have taken this idea of the Muse at all seriously, I am not able to think, I am sure that there are some, perhaps not major poets.

Padmavajra: Rilke seems to have a thing about being visited by something exterior to him.

S: That is true, but it is not exactly invocation, it is sort of something that takes him over, and he doesn't even know when it is coming, or how long it is going to last, he doesn't seem to envisage it in terms of the Muse in that more traditional sense.

Padmavajra: Do you think Eliot had it in any of his religious some of his poems are a bit like sort of prayers aren't they ?

S: mm, that is true, but I don't think he had any conception of the Muse, any more than you remember he had a conception of the angel. Anyway the answer to the question generally is yes. I think it is something that is worth exploring, trying to trace out its ramifications.

Sagaramati: I think we actually mentioned in our discussion whether the idea of a guardian angel, in the pagan sense not in the Christian sense, whether that could have any reference to one's personal myth.

S: I think there could be a sort of tie up between the two. One could even speak of one's personal Archetype. Myth refers more to the story of one's life as it actually unfolds, the pattern of your life, whereas the Guardian Angel refers more to the overall higher quality of your life.

Subhuti: In the definition of Art that you give in the lecture, there is a slight difference in that definition and one of the definitions that you give in The Religion of Art. In The Religion of Art you give this definition twice, and in the second case you add the phrase, "pleasureable formal relations." Abhaya: "The organisation of sensuous impressions into pleasureable formal relations, and that phrase "into pleasureable formal relations" is not included in your other instances of the definition.

S: I cannot remember, but it is probably inadvertent, because it does add something. Because first of all you have got the sensuous impressions, whether of the eye or the ear and so on. And then you have got the pleasureable formal relation. At that stage there is nothing representational, if you are speaking say of the visual arts, there is no meaning in the strict sense. As in for instance modern Abstract Art, you have just got bands of colours and patterns that don't add up to anything in a sense meaningful, not that is in representational terms. So

yes I

think, I would need to think about it, but I think that is an essential part of the definition, the pleasureable formal relations.

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Subhuti: You don't in fact in the definition otherwise mention if you like the (re~aLion~ of beauty and delight, and pleasure. It does seem quite necessary.

S: Yes, one can speak of pleasureable formal relations in connection with say pottery, that is probably a good example.

Vairocana: I don't quite understand this, does this mean that a work of art has to be pleasant actually to look at? Suppose a work of art wasn't pleasant, does it mean it cannot really communicate say something of reality?

S: What do I go onto say in the next clause of the definition?

Abhaya: "which expresses the artists' sensibilities and communicate a sense of values which can transform their lives."

S: I think that is where the pleasureable formal relations as such have their limitations, they don't, cannot communicate that sense of values which can transform our lives. I am doubtful whether music can therefore. I have had quite a few thoughts about music, because yes music is the sensuous impressions, and there are pleasureable formal relations, and yes, the sensitivity of the artist is expressed. But what about a communication of a sense of values that can transform our lives? I mean there was incident of () which gave me a great deal of food for thought here, I have mentioned this before, but it is in Roshi Kapleau's account of his life and how he became a Buddhist, have you heard it?

Vairocana: About the concentration camp?

S: Yes, and how the commander in the camp who was after all superintending the murder of so many hundreds of people used to enjoy Bach. So this really struck me at the time. So, as far as we know, his appreciation of Bach was genuine, he really did enjoy it, but if there had been any communication of values as distinct from that music been associated with values conventionally, surely that person would not have been able to enjoy that music? And also it is well known that people can read different things into music, and the enjoyment of music is sort of ethically neutral in a way.

Abhaya: Couldn't you say, Bhante, that that is due to the subjective state of the person listening to the music, if he is very unintegrated and maybe like part of himself could appreciate the 'sensuous impression into pleasureable formal relations' but not necessarily connect with any thing else. I don't see it as a proof that music couldn't transform your life.

S: Well another example again from Bach, it is well known that some of Bach melodies and in fact some of his music was transposed by Bach himself from a religious to a secular mode and a music that on one occasion was dressed up as a mass or something of that sort, and on another occasion was dressed up as a series of dance movements for a tavern performance. But it is the same music, but the the different associations cause you to read something different into it. So if you just hear the music what do you read into it? It is as though the music doesn't really convey a content. Schopenhauer has gone into this, he was the first person who started off this sort of line of thought.

I cannot say that I am 100% sure of this, but he does with

(?) suggest this. There does seem to be

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a difference between this say perhaps music, and say painting to some extent, and poetry say, which seems to have a fuller range of expression.

Abhaya: I was thinking this morning of an example of say listening to a piece of music, say perhaps a relatively crude level, you may say have a passage which evokes a feeling of great struggle and then emerging from that struggle there is a sort of heroic note which might communicate a sense of values in the sense that it would encourage you to get out of your phase of struggle and make an effort to develop.

S: Well put it this way, it seems to me that music is as it were dhyanic. The dhyanas can give you an intense emotional experience, but the dhyanas don't give you insight. I think and I am only feeling my way towards this, I think I see some such parallel as between music and poetry, the arts where there is so to speak a meaning and then a sense of values which can be communicated. For instance after a good meditation you can feel sort of inspired, but it won't last. So in the same way listening to Beethoven you can feel very heroic, but you listen to a bit of say Debussy immediately afterwards and you feel all languid and not at all heroic, and your mood can be very much changed. It is as though music cannot bring about any permanent change, it can effect your mood, again I am sort of speculating a bit, but not your overall sort of conviction, which must be based on a more solid sense of values and a more

definite meaning.

Sagaramati: But can any work of art do that ? I would say that even poetry can't.

S: Well, not every kind of poetry obviously. But, where poetry, so to speak does contain a meaning, and actually communicates a sense of values, I think that has at least the possibility of giving rise to some kind of almost insight e~per~~~~~aS~~~ I'm very doubtful whether music or say abstract pa~nt~ng~~~ud~L~ do that. Again I won't be completely sure of this, it is more a line of thought, rather than a conclusion I have definitely come to.

Sagaramati: Because even if you look at some of the lives of the artists.-. I mean you can be inspired by some of their work, but then you read about them as peop and it is really very disappointing sometimes, you couldn't ally look up to them... I mean Shelley is an example.

S:Of course I have touched upon that in the lecture. On the other hand reading Shelley's life, are conscious of one thing and that is that he did develop. When he was a young man he was quite impossible. He was so self-opinionated etc, etc. but he does develop, and by the end of his life he is a comparatively mature person. So one does see that overall development, and no doubt his poetry develops with that. His early poetry is very shrill and not very pleasing, but the later poetry has got quite a different quality. To take the latest example of all, 'The Triumph of Life' that is very different from anything he wrote when he was young.

Padmavajra: Wh~n you say poetry can make you have a conviction

a strong conviction about life...

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S: In the sense that poetry, in as much as it is in the medium of words, can convey a~meaning. Because how else is a meaning con- veyed ? Even when a Buddha speaks, he speaks in prose normally, sometimes in poetry and there is an intelligible content, and it is that which imparts his meaning, communicates his~meaning, and sets you off as it were. So in the case of poetry it is as though all its other elements, its sensuous elements, its rythm and all that sort of thing adds to the impact of the meaning, sort of re- inforces it. For instance you find this very much if you try to as it were translate poetry into prose. Well the meaning is the same but it often loses its impact. But even if you translate poetic prose into prosaic prose. I happened to listen the other Sunday to a bit of a service on the radio where... I think it was a Church of England service, but it was~in English, modern English, and it sounded so odd. "Our Father who are in Heaven, Hallowed be your name1, it had been just changed a bit here and there, "May your kingdom come" etc and the poetry was lost and in some way the meaning and the appeal was lost. And there is this famous example in the Book of Ruth, you can take this as not as religion at all, but just as sort of poetry, when Ruth says, "Entreat me not to leave thee", well translated into Modern English, "Don't ask me to go" (laughter) You see what I mean ? It is completely different, although formally the same.

Sagramati: Some people say that the former is old-fashioned.

S: Well that illustrates what we were talking about earlier on.

Vairocana: You said something about Abstract Art, it sounded as if you weren't very in favour of Abstract Art...

S: Not at all, Abstract Art is like music, there is a pleasureable pattern of formal relations. For instance Islamic Art is a non-representational art. All those arabesques and so on, they are very very pleasureable, but they don't convey a meaning, unless they are interweaving Arabic things that you cannot make out. But where they are just geometrical designs, beautiful and intricate and colourful, one can respond to them quite intensely as one does sometimes to pottery, but no meaning is conveyed. The poetry above and beyond all that sort of thing in linguistic form conveys an actual meaning and communicates a meaning which can change you potentially.

Sagramati: Couldn't you bring that distinction to music? I mean some music is very pleasant to listen to, even say Bach, it is only some of Bach that definitely touches you in a way that. ...

S: But what does it touch and what is, so to speak, the meaning? In view of the example I gave, where Bach sets the same music sometimes as a mass and sometimes as something quite secular?

Sagramati: Well in one case there was the first movement of a Cantata and he transposed it into a Brandenburg concerto first movement. But he couldn't do that with say some movements of the Mass in B minor, you just could not transpose it.

S: I wouldn't put it beyond Bach. For instance people listening to the same music have such very different ideas, it calls up such very different associations.

Kulamitra: But you said music, and I think this would be true of the art you described as well, can be as it were like a dhyana,
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can give you a feeling of the dhyana state, if you respond to that feeling that there is definitely a higher experience, I mean that in itself can have a deep impact on your life, can't it? I know it is not insight.

S: But only as a passing mood, to go beyond that you would need to be convinced in some sort of way that there was some permanent state beyond that which could be gained as so to speak a permanent achievement, and there was a reason for doing that, again in a manner of speaking.

Ratnaprabha: So this seems to restrict your definition of Art quite a lot, doesn't it? Because....

S: Yes, and no. Because I give a full definition. And clearly in my definition there are different successive even cumulative stages, or phases. So it is not that those works which do not fulfil that definition in its entirety are not works of art, but that some works of art are more completely works of art than others, and even some genre, as it were, are more completely works of art than others by virtue of their very nature.

Ratnaprabha: So your definition is deliberately divided, as it were, into phrases, and each successive phrase represents

S: an additional element. So that each time an additional element is added, the work of art becomes more complex, becomes more rich, and more fully a work of art. I am not saying that say a beautiful pot is not a work of art. Yes, it is a work of art, but it is not such a rich and complex work of art as say representational painting. I am not saying therefore that every representational painting is better than any pot. That also must be clear. It is the question of the potentiality of that particular medium, being greater, whether or not it is actually fulfilled in any given case than that of another. Again though I must say that I won't be too as it were dogmatic here, these are lines of thought rather than very definite conclusions.

Kuladeva: Are you saying then that the element in poetry which corresponds to insight is a paradox of insight.. Is that art ?

S: No, it is one of the elements of art, of a work of art. If you have that and only that doesn't make a work of art. in

Kuladeva~ But therefore, since it contains that, poetry is, potential at least, a higher form of art than music. I was under the impression that it was generally understood that music was the highest form of art.

S: Yes this is what I was saying...And some people do believe that, mainly because they say that music gives the most intense emotional experience and gives it most quickly. But I am simply not accepting this as sufficient criterion for a work of art. It may well be that music does have that particular quality more than any other kind of art, that is quite possible, and in fact is highly likely. But its strength in that particular respect doesn't in my view necessarily mean that music therefore is the highest form of art.

Padmavajra: So it is the conceptual element in poetry that makes the difference ?

S: You might even say some paintings have very bright colours, and therefore you might argue a work of art with the brightest

colours is the greatest work of art, well, that would exclude music

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altogether (Answering Padmavajra's question) Of course it is not conceptual in the conceptual sense, because if it is integrated into the overall context it ceases to be conceptual, in the conceptual sense.

Padmavajra: It is more,, well I suppose your best expression is imaginative ?

S: I would say there is a connection. I would say no more than that. I don't think you could equate the two. Because you speak of the whole work of art as a 'work of imagination' in its entirety. It is not just a particular element in that which is to be equated with imagination. But anyway you see what I am getting at ? I see a work of art as a very complex thing, and I see particular types of art as including more or less of those particular elements, and I tend to see, rightly or wrongly, the higher forms of art as including all those elements and not just a few of them, or one or two of them.

Ratnaguna: This morning we were discussing values - in the last part of your definition there is "that communicates a higher sense of values that can transform our lives". Does that mean a dhyana state, or a higher state of consciousness in that respect, is not a higher sense of values that can transform your life?

S: I am not speaking in terms of a sort of dhyana type experience, but at least of, so to speak, a sort of intellectual apprehension of a sort of philosophy in the light of which there is some higher goal or some higher ideal or some objective for the individual human being. I don't think that music can really communicate that. I mean someone listening to music might think, "ah yes, this is about heaven, this is about God." But somebody else might think listening to it, "ah this is about my home, about my old mother" (laughter) sometimes completely different.

Sagaramati: But isn't it a case of what the composer is trying to express...

S: Sometimes they weren't trying to express anything, they say, "well it means what you think it means." I mean sometimes they were trying to express something, but that is called programme music, isn't it ? Yes they were trying to describe spring, and there is the rustling of the trees and the twittering of the birds, it is all there, but very often they will say, "well, no, we weren't having anything in mind in particular, the listener's interpretation is entirely subjective. Someone might say, "ah, that particular music is just like the waves of the sea", somebody might say, "well it is just like the cornfield in the sunlight", somebody else 'like moonlight' and somebody else, "just like the gentle breathing of the beloved" (laughter) There is such different interpretations, all right and all wrong.

Ratnaguna: But if a composer was inspired at the time they were writing, would not that communicate itself, that inspiration, communicate itself to the listener ?

S: But what I am saying perhaps is that the composer as such cannot be inspired to that extent, and at least even if he is, he cannot in fact express it through his music. Supposing the Buddha had not been allowed to speak. Suppose he had only composed music, do you think that would have the same effect upon us, or that it would

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have the same effect on us or it would have produced Buddhism in the same way that his actual speaking~did ?

Padmavajra: It is said of Ashvagosha that he could play the melody of impermanence.

S: Yes, but how did you know it was the melody of impermanence ? (laughter) The fact is that you call it the melody of impermanence, and that means that it is in a way not complete in itself. I mean somebody else might have given it a completely different ... if you are a pious monk, yes it might sound like the melody of impermanence, but if you weren't a pious monk, it might sound like, "eat, drink and be merry."

Sagramati: But there aren't definite formal relations between the way a scale is formed and a particular note. I mean the Greeks had different notes.

S: But then again, it is -only a mood, like a dhyana. It isn't a mood of insight, put it that way. Anyway let's pass on.

Ratnaprabha: Could your definition of art usefully be taken to reveal New Men in general to be at least artists, or should the term artist be restricted to people working in fields traditionally called the fine arts ?

S: I think it probably should. I might even have spoken of the the New Man or the True Individual as an Artist. One can so speak in the sense that his own life is the work of art that he creates. But unless one speaks of the New Man very obviously in that sort of sense to speak of him as an artist might lead to confusion. Especially nowadays there is such a lot of woo~y thinking about creativity. Almost anything that you do can be creative, it is just a sort of label that people put onto their activities to make them feel that they are doing something worthwhile, "that its just as good as whatever Beethoven or Michelangelo or Rembrandt did," - you have creative everything these days. So I would say it is probably not generally advisable to speak of the Individual as such as an Artist, though within a certain definite context one can do that.

Ratnaprabha: Why should, as I think you do suggest in the lecture, the phrase 'the organisation of sensuous impressions' exclude the mind sense, so that say truly creative philosophy could be counted as art ?

S: There can be an organization of Ideas clearly. But what is the purpose of the organization of ideas ? The purpose is presumably to express or to communicate truth. So that would seem to come in at another level as it were, that would seem to belong to the communication of a sense of values that can transform their lives, because in order to communicate that you have to organize ideas and of course you do get ideas organized in poetry.

Ratnaprabha: What I was thinking of was that poetry includes organized sense impressions in the sense of sounds or even the marks on the page in a trivial sense. But philosophy except in a trivial sense one could say is not communicated through sense impressions. So therefore you are excluding it from art because sense impressions are restricted to the five senses.

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S: I am not sure what the question is, whether it is a question about meaning, or whether it is a question about the mind as a sixth sense ?

Ratnaprabha: It is a question as to whether it would give you a more comprehensive definition or even a more useful definition of art if the mind was included as a sixth sense in the first part of the definition so that say philosophy would then become an art.

S: I doubt if Philosophy as such is an art, because what is the purpose of Philosophy ? You can have philosophy certainly which is not an art, you can have philosophy in a very inartistic form, a form which is even unpleasing, so how could that be an art ? I think there can be an art as it were philosophical content through a work of art and that is covered by the 'meaning that can transform our lives.' So you can put it this way, that some Art is some philosophy and some Philosophy is some Art, but not all Art is Philosophy and not all Philosophy is Art.

Ratnaprabha: Could I just pursue this, another example that we briefly discussed was of the poem in translation, where the translation is simply a literal translation and not an attempt to convey the rhythm or the sound of the poem. So you have a literal translation of a poem, now most people would probably say that although it didn't convey fully the qualities of the original poem, it was perhaps, to some extent at least, conveying a work of art, but yet in that case no more than philosophy is there really sense impression being put across.

S: Well there is some sense impression, because there is some sound of the word, there is some rhythm, and it is not the same as the sound of the original. It is not so completely wedded to the meaning, but those rudiments are there, so that you have a sense of the original in its integrity behind. I wouldn't say, as some people might say that you preserve the meaning, I wouldn't even say that you preserve the meaning because I don't think the meaning is a completely separable element. I think it is a question of a work of art as I have defined it as a number of different elements or qualities in a certain balance. You might say, "if you leave out the element of the pleasurable sensuous impressions, the pleasurable formal relations"~and all that sort of thing, what you have left is a certain meaning, which may or may not be a meaning that transforms your life. What I was wondering was whether you were trying to work mathematics in as a form of Art. That might possibly have been more plausible, because mathematicians do say that the contemplation of mathematical equations does give them aesthetic pleasure. So you could say that is an example of formal relations as contemplated by just the mind and not through the senses. So perhaps mathematics would be an example of that kind or perhaps it could be not that all mathematics is Art, just as not

all equations are elegant, as they say. But equations that were elegant could be regarded be as mathematics as art, and that perhaps would fill in your blank space.

Ratnaprabha: So perhaps if you really wanted to you could push in the mind sense as well the other senses ?

S: Yes, I would say if one was to push it in at all, it would probably be much more effectively pushed in as in connection with mathematics than in connection with philosophy. Because

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'mathematical equation' has no meaning beyond it self, does it ? Even a simple one: Two and Two is four. What does it mean ?, except that two and two is four. (laughter) Nothing more and nothing less, exactly that. You have really complicated equations which mean what they mean, they don't mean anything beyond. And some mathematicians say that some of those equations are just beautiful to contemplate. Mathematics even enters into music, doesn't it ? For those who know music, who are say familiar with counter-point and things like that. It even enters in a way into the visual arts in the form of proportion and the golden section and so on.

Sagaramati: So is philosophy not included ?

S: Well no, I didn't say that. I said there was a philosophical element that was covered by " the meaning that can transform our lives". Not that all Philosophy necessarily transforms our lives You could say that there were two kinds of Philosophy, the Philosophy that does and the Philosophy that doesn't. But Poetry in its fullest definition is capable of incorporating both. A painting I think cannot communicate a philosophy, it can illustrate a philosophy, but you need to know the philosophy first to be able to recognise the illustration, therefore the painting itself does not directly communicate the philosophy, I would say. I mean for instance if you have an illustration of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, well here is a young man with beard, an old man also with a beard, in between them is a dove. Well would this communicate to you the actual theological dogma of the Holy Trinity, even if they were arranged in an equilateral triangle and whatnot ? No. You would have to know that that is what it signified, that that was what it was illustrating. It doesn't communicate that particular truth at all. That can be communicated only through words I would say. ...

Ratnaprabha: Isn't this partly a question of language though ? I mean with Art you can have a symbolic language which you can learn. Once you know that language then the pictures can

communicate to you. With poetry you have to know the English language before you can understand it.

S: Mmm, but are you not describing symbols as language in a meta- phorical sense. Is it really a language in the way that ordinary language is ?

Padmavajra: Symbols there would surely have a conceptual equivalent ? Like it is more or less a sign, which leaves us with the same difficulty.

Kuladeva; Does this also apply to visualisation in meditation ?

S: Well there is the twofold aspect, the form as:visualised and the meaning which is connected with the form, which to begin with is just conventionally associated with it, but which eventually you reach or contact in a more real sense.

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Subhuti: You mention in the lecture that there is in the modern age no tribal Art being produced, having been placed by mass produced goods wondered if you had 'th~u'ghts' 'on' the imp~lic'ati~ne 'of thie' deve lop~nent' ?

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S: Well I almost don't dare to think... I don't actually, but my feeling is without giving proper thought to it and I don't think I have given proper thought to it, that really the implications must be pretty horrific. Perhaps I could give it further thought some other time. It means for instance that very very few people are so to speak creatively employed. I mean formally everybody engaged in some sort of Art-as it were. For instance today in India on festival occasions, I mean women folk draw patterns, elaborate quite beautiful patterns in rice paste on their doorsteps and all over the courtyard. Well it is an art in a way, though a minor art, a very humble art, but it is an art, it does give some means of artistic expression. It is folk art. But we have so little of that now. And perhaps some modest artistic production is a feature of a healthy life, perhaps it is essential to psychic health. So if it is essential, and it probably is, if you are deprived of the opportunity of that sort of expression, it cannot have a very good effect on you. But I cannot really say more than that at the moment, but I strongly suspect that there are all sorts of dreadful implications.

Subhuti: If there are, that that will have implications for the kind of life that we are trying to build, within the New Society.

S: I have always been abit dis~~pointed that people weren't more keen on producing hand dipped candles (laughter) They seem to think "what a waste of timet", they seem to think in the term of money, and not really like to be working in... It isn't highly creative admittably, but at least it is producing something which you can produce quite effectively and quite

beautifully, if you put your mind to it. And perhaps food can be creatively produced in a modest sort of way, can't it? In India cooking is included amongst the sixty-four arts. It is productive to begin with, well maybe productive isn't quite the word, because you don't actually grow the vegetables, but yes it is creative in a modest degree, and that is not to be despised. It is potentially creative in a modest degree anyway. I'm sure people could be more creative in these modest ways, even to the extent of just keeping their area or their living quarters clean, tidy, attractive, appealing and so on, and trying to have relatively decent, though still of course inexpensive cups, saucers and plates which you don't break too often. Not ugly things as far as you can avoid.

Subhuti: Shrines also.

S: Indeed, this has been quite noticeable in the course of the last two or three years, shrines which have been created, that is really the word here, are really getting better and better all the time. I noticed quite recently here there are all sorts of extra decorations on the occasion of a retreat for an Ordination that I did here. The standard of shrine creation seems to be going up all the time. People actually buying things specially for the shrine, not just finding odd bits and pieces left over from something else. It is not just an old table cloth anymore. People actually go and buy cloths of different colours, which are quite nicely matched and so on. This is' definately a creative outlet perhaps for some people who cannot draw, or play musical instruments and so on and so forth, not that they necessarily can't but that there are some people who can express themselves in creating shrines.

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Subhuti: You mention that the greatest artists go beyond point three 'ie:' the '~point~ of no return. Were you speaking loosely or do you consider that some artists are stream entrants, and if so, couldn't some of them express themselves in creating shrines?

S: I think I was speaking a bit loosely, though again I cannot exclude that. But one can only have evidence of that in say poetry. I think a musician might have attained insight, might have attained Stream Entry, but I doubt if he could communicate that through, communicate his attainment through his music, but we couldn't communicate it through his poetry. It is very difficult because we don't for instance read say Chinese or Japanese Zen Poetry in the original, and also a Chan or Zen poem might be a very good communication, an insight experience, but is it poetry, is it a poetic communication? That is something that one would have to go into. I must say a poet that I have been very much impressed by recently is Rykan. Even in translation, there is a very peculiar, very distinctive quality about his poetry, it is very difficult to put one's finger on. So one almost feels there is something insight like coming through, even though it is a translation. There is a slim volume recently been translated Now I mention it, I really think we ought to stock this in all our bookstall, it really is very good indeed.

Sudhana: "One Robe, One Bowl.

S: That's right; very simple apparently his poems in Japanese are very simple, no

classical allusions at all, or anything of that sort, so therefore quite easy to translate relatively speaking. But there is a certain quality of feeling and experience, that is quite extraordinary.

Sudhana: It is a lovely book for solitary retreats.

Abhaya: What period is he ?

Sudhana: Nineteenth century.

S: the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century.

Sagaramati: You seem to have changed your mind somewhat from a few years ago, during or about the time of the Sutra of Golden Light lectures, where you mentioned that you did think that in the case of some of Bach's work there was some element of the transcendental. I didn't hear that directly from you, but it was related to me.

S: If I did feel that, I think it was by association. Yes, but that wouldn't be my considered view that music as such could convey that. Of course a musical setting might, you might have words set to music, but then that would be a combination of music and poetry, so to speak, at least music and words, and the words might convey the insight and the music might sort of emotionally predispose you to receive that insight. A mass for instance is a setting to music of certain words of a religious tradition. Opera can convey a meaning, there is words and action too.

Ratnaguna: This refers to the chart. That is to say the chart you gave in the lecture, Art and the Spiritual Life¹ which is a sort of sub-chart if you like. In the Dharmachakra table catalogue you have different names for the four sections, A, B, C, D., I don't know whether they are your names or somebody else's. For A, it is No culture-Primitive Tribalism¹ B is Folk Culture - Rudiment

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Art forms, Elementary Representation'alism.

S: I would have thought Tribal and Folk would sort of overlap. I think in the lecture, I have more or less identified them, haven't I? Yes', perhaps that is a misunderstanding, if that wasn't due to me, let's say. that diagram, then it is the result of a misunderstanding. When I say Tribal and Folk, whoever made the diagram might have thought I meant A: Tribal, B: Folk, whereas I really mean Tribal or Folk. I don't think it was me, because I don't think I

would use the term 'Tribalism'. I think I would say Primitive and Tribal, if I would say anything.

So anyway it carries on, C is Higher Culture - symbiotic group culture, symbolic and metaphysical art.

No this cannot be me, no I am sorry, no. The terms are mine, no doubt, but I didn't put them in this context.

And D is ethnic religion - Objective Art.

No, I think someone has tried to put it together. I think I will have to look into this more carefully, so be cautious how you use that chart in study groups.

Ratnaguna: So it safer to stick with what you said in the lecture ?

S: I think so yes, and ignore that, ignore those descriptions anyway.

..... Well is that it. We have covered quite alot of ground, but clearly all these lectures need rewriting and recasting in extended literary form. If anyone else would like to have a shot well they are quite welcome to do that. Even if they recast in their own way, provided they cover that ground it doesn't matter. Sort of base themselves on that broad framework and produce perhaps something of their own which is interesting and readable.

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Subhuti: The first question is from Sagramati on practicality of insight.

S: Practicality of?

Su'bhuti: Insight.

S: This arises out of today's lecture?

Voices: Today's lecture, yes. (Laughter.)

Sagramati: How practical is transcendental insight? For example it seems that the early Buddhists rely too much upon royal patronage. Was not this rather short-sighted knowing how fickle kings can be? So presuming that some of these early Buddhists had transcendental insight, why is it that they did not sort of see the outcome of their actions?

S: Just repeat the very beginning of the question.

Sagramati: For example it seems that the early Buddhists relied too much upon royal patronage for their - for instance their economic survival.

S: Not exactly. I did trace the process of devotment. In a way it goes deeper than that because I made the point that the large monasteries depended upon royal patronage. Because if you have say several thousand people in one place, all needing to be supported, well there is only one person with resources who is able to do that, it's the king or in some cases very very wealthy merchants. But that is only the culmination of a much more general pattern, that is to say it is the culmination of the pattern whereby the individual monk depends upon the individual lay supporter or lay supporters. It's the sort of extreme manifestation of a much

more general trend. So one is really questioning I suppose the whole structure of the aramytical (?) and celabitical monastic life in relation to lay support. So really one is questioning that whole sort of alinost division of labour and, as people probably know, over the years I myself have become less and less satisfied with that particular pattern. In the case of the large monasteries in India and even e"lsewhere, even in Tibet until very recent days, and royal support, that only represents the basic problem (rich ?) large in quite unmistakable terms. So what one is really concerned with is whether one should have a spiritual community of fully committed people who are not eco- nomically productive so they can devote all their time to spiritual life but depending on others who are not spiritually committed and who are engaged in productive activity and able and willing to support them. On the whole I've come to the conclusion that it is not a desirable pattern - at least not for today. I would say for several reasons. As it one, ? say one or two generations apart, there is no guara~fltee that~ those who are say technically monks will in fact use their free time for strictly spiritual purposes. Two It is doubtful whether an average healthy ' young man especially really can dispense with physical activity. Thirdly, it's very doubtful whether it's a good thing to have a sort of division of labour where both monks and lay people are technically Buddhists but

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it's only the monk who makes the serious effort to practice the Dharma. That let's the majority of the people, the majority of the population very much off the hook. They become mere supporters of the monks and that gives rise to the idea that one can lead a Buddhist life precariously almost, that the fact that you support the monks will mean that you are in a sense leading a religious life, at least you are accumulating punya which is going to ensure you a good rebirth. So really you are not practising the reli- gion at all and this sort of attitude also~precludes - for want of a better term - the spiritualisation or transformation of society as a whole to the extent that it can be spiritualised or transformed - you tend to have a sort of pocket of people seriously or intensively practising the Dharma at least in theory and the fact that you have ~such a pocket of people j'ustifies the rest so to speak in not really taking the spiritual life very seriously. But this is really the question. But wha't you are asking is well was this not seen or foreseen? That is really not an easy question to answer. I've become increasingly doubtful whether the Buddha himself actuall'g set up this pattern. I've recently been rereading Mrs. Rhys Davies' work. She is of the opinion that the Buddha did n~t as it were in principle intend to set up a monastic community in the sense of one dependent for support upon the laity. According to her, the majority of the 61 disciples were so to speak lay men - most of them being of (Yasha ?) origin; Yasha (?) and his companions. But - according to her - the Buddha wanted to send them forth, in fact did send them forth in all directions to teach his Dharma, and it seems at that time that the most convenient way for them to do that - the most convenient way in which they could devote all 'their time just to communicating that message going from to place to place was just to avail themselves of the hospitality of the people that they met on their way, such hospitality being readily available to

travellers and monks and holy 'men and all sorts of people. In this way, according to her - a sort of pattern was developed of dependence upon the hospitality of the, as it were, lay people. Though at that time there was not that sort of distinction between lay and monastic, it was more like the dependence upon travellers, on the hospitality of local people. It was the custom apparently in those days to give such hosp'itality whenever one could. Later on according to her, this developed in an actual pattern of herme- tical monasticism. So looking at it in that way, it was not the Buddha's intention to set up that kind of religio-economic structure. It did develop. But of course what one can imagine (?) and say well it did work. So even when you did have so to speak monks depending in large numbers on an economically collective laity this system worked quite well; it was traditional, so people did not question it, especially as they did not have in those days the developed historical sense that we have now, and there would seem to be no reason why the fact that you had attained spiritual insight or t~anscendental insight, would mean that you'd developed a sort of historical understanding in historical perspective at the same. That would seem to have no necessary connection with transcendental insight at all. Nonetheless as many centuries went by and after Buddhism has suffered from over-centralisation it should have started to become obvious; not to people with transcen- dental insight a~ such ~but to 'people with common sense and some sense of history and willingness to learn f~rom experience; there

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was something gravely wrong with that particular pattern. But, yes, even there it does seem some Buddhists, some schools of Buddhism in fact, woke up to the dangers. And certainly the Ch~'an~~sc~hool which encouraged monasticism of his own type - as it were reformed type - did encourage monks to work; in Tibet also it was not unknown for monks to work in the sense of following occupations which norma- ily be' -rather' secular and maintaining themselves thereby.

A question there. Does that mean that our conception of the 'sramana' is .. we tend to think of the sramana as a wandering monk, I think, and is that & wrong way of thinking because the Buddha...

S: It's not so much the sramana, °it's the parivrajaka. The parivra- jakas were the wanderers; the sramanas tended to be those wanderers who did not follow brahminical traditions. But there is at least one instance to my recollection in the Canon, in the Pali scriptures, referring to a married parivrajaka who went travelling around taking his w'ife with him - like a sort of gipsy. So you can't quite look at the parivrajakas as sort of wandering monks; they weren't quite that although many of them were and that became the standard type of parivrajaka or -wanderer at some date.

_____ Also in connection with Mrs Rhys Davies' belief that the first sixty disciples were mostly laymen, does that mean the ordination of Yasha that's given in the scriptures did not actually take place?

S: Again it raises the whole question of ordination because even the Wali tradition - the Theravada tradition - says quite clearly that there were six kinds of ordinations - I think it's six. The first of which was ordination simply by the Buddha saying 'ehi bhikkhohe' ? - come bhikkhu - and then ordination by the three-fold refuge formula, simply. That way, it would seem that in retrospect someone who is actually Going for Refuge ~~ regarded as tantamount to what later became the full monastic ordination. Mrs Rhys Davies' point is that Yasha and his companions heard the Buddha speak, they were convinced, their Dhamma eye opened, they went for refuge but she does not believe that they thereupon became fully fledged monks. She believed - and it seems quite logical - that that was a reading back into that situation of what later on became standard. According to her, yes, there they were, having listened to the Buddha, having gained insight, having gone for refuge to the Buddha but not necessarily having taken that step into monasticism in the later sense. They were certainly detached from the world, they were at the Buddha's disposal but they did not necessarily - in fact she believed that they didn't --become monks in a full technical sense on the spot. They were part of the people connected with the Buddha; they may have gone on' just livin~g 'at home or they may have just settled around the Buddha - there was nothing very organi- sed at that time - then the Buddha decided to send them all out in different directI7ns - all sixty of them; that is to say the first five, and Yasha and his friends; send them out in different directions or two together as the usual interpretation has it and it was then that they started adopting a sort of wOndering which eventually became a sort of monastic life because that was the best way for them to go from place to place, spreading the Dhamma.

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But certainly she does not think - and I think she is right here - of the Buddha as immediatley founding a monastic order into which people who developed that insight after listening to his teaching were promptly admitted, and clearly the Theravada tradition of the different types of ordination really supports that. Ordination - or what was later called ordination - usually being first of all no more than the Buddha just s'aying ' well come, just come with me'. He did not necessarily say 'bhikkhu, come bhikkhu' in the full later sense. He said just come; just ~ome and be with me; join me. And then of course, there was just the form of going for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. And then of course, there was ordination by about five already ordained 'monks' in inverted commas or rather the ten already 6rdained~~onks. (?) So this is a quite serious issue this question of whether there should be a monastic order depending on the support ... I don't think I can sort of rule out the possibility that some people may be supported as it were from time to time so they can devote themselves fully to specificaliy~ dharma a~tivities but I think 'it is undesirable that we should have two classes of people and those who are supported regarded as full-time practitioners and those who are not supported are regarded as well not really practising at all. Also I think that I've made this point before: there seems this ancient Indian sort of cultural prejudice that sort of working and earning your leaving was somewhat inferior; there was something disgraceful attached to it, especially working with your hands. They did not see that as any part of the full development of a human being at all. Many bhikkhus in the East keep up a sort of double pattern. I saw instances of this very clearly. For instance I remember this

going in my current volume of memoirs. There is something which really impressed me this instance of~ a quite elderly monk whom I knew who came up to Kalimpong and spent some time there and he'd been a general secretary of some Hindi organisation and he enjoyed a quite substantial pension and that is that he had an income as a result of having worked but he still presented himself as a poor monk who was totally dependent upon his supporters. I remember one particular instance; it really stuck in my mind and this is the instance which is going in my memoirs. There was a very poor ~ewar family living in(?); The'~ were very poor~. I tried to include them sometimes~in my begging round when I used to go for alms in the bazaar the first couple of years I was in Kalimpong but I hesitated even to go; I used to go not very often to them because I knew that~ they were so poor.~~ And~ a' 11 the time I was in Kalimpong ~they would invite me for a meal; I always tried to get out of it without hurting their feelings because I knew that they really in a sense could not afford it; they were very very poor and had quite a big family of children. But I happened to be with this particular monk on one occasion when this particular - the head of this particular family, ~he husband ~r' the father came to see him. And so this particular elderly monk started talking and said 'Oh I've broken my sandal today and where am I going to get a pair of sandals from, where would a poor bhikkhu like me get a pair of sandals from. He went on in this way. So this poor man said 'Bhante, I'll buy you a pair of sandals.' So, that was that. The man went and bought a pair of sandals for seven or eight rupees as it were then. I felt this; I did. Because he was a very senior monk, I was very junior, I did not say anything but it really

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sort of hit me and I knew he had this mica (?). Not only that - I was on quite friendly terms with one of his disciples - but the disciple also" noted and he said to me 'what do you think? I've just seen his bank passbook, he's got 2000 rupees in the bank.' So on the one hand you see, it's a double thing and this really shocked me. I did not think it was wrong for a monk to earn money and earn an income necessarily or not in a way wrong to depend on the laity but to combine both in his way I thought it was really dreadful; not only that but he was strongly communist in ... (laughter); the whole story is going in my present volume of memoirs because it really made an impression on me. You can imagine I was - I could not have been more than about 27 or 28 and I was still young enough to be very idealistic in a naive sort of way; I was quite shocked by this, quite shocked. I lost whatever faith I had in that particular monk from the spiritual point of view. Anyway, perhaps we'd better pass on from there.

Subhuti: It's in the same area. The implications for us of decay in Buddhism in India.

_____ : You mentioned in the talk the five factors in the decline of Buddhism in India. These being: the centralisation of the sangha, its dependence on royal patronage; the continuing possibility of the brahmins, their attempt to absorb Buddhist teaching into Hinduism and the Muslim invasion.

S: Incidentally I gave a lecture on this subject in India - a big public lecture - three years ago,

my last tour but one. The title of the lecture was roughly - I forget what it was in M~rathi but 'How Buddhism disappeared from India and how we can prevent the same thing from happening again?' It's not available in English I am afraid but it's appeared in Marathi - it's been published in Dhammamegha - it's one of my most popular lectures, they've study groups on it I believe.

_____ (I might say?) the actual question is in that area. Do you think similar factors could affect our own movement, ie. If we concentrate our order in large centres, could we end up losing touch with our society? Are we becoming too dependent on the state for financial aid? Could people with vested interests oppose our growth? I am sure you could probably think of other factors but that's the general idea of the area I was wondering about.

S: Well clearly we must be concerned with those issues. From the point of view of destruction of your big centre, I don't think that's not much of a question nowadays because governments are so powerful and wars are such that they can destroy you wherever you are. You are not less likely to be destroyed if you are dispersed in villages instead of being concentrated in capital cities. In fact short of atomic war, you might stand a better chance of survival if you are a bit bigger and if you were very big, at least in some countries, governments might think twice about attacking you. Dependent on the state... I think there is no reason why one should not take advantage of State Support if you can't get it but 1) you must not compromise your ideals and 2) you must not be dependent on it in such a way that the sudden withdrawal of that support will really pull the rug from under your feet, it should be a sort of extra for expansion, not something that you depend upon regularly

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for your day to day running as it were. Also I have been very conscious of the fact that Buddhism and Hinduism came to resemble each other more and more and eventually got mixed up. This is partly why I am very careful in this kind of thing with regard to Christianity. It is still the majority religion and we could very easily be swamped if we weren't careful, there is a handful of us in comparison. So whatever may be our broader spiritual sympathie I don't think we can afford if we want to survive as an independent tradition to compromise in any way with Christian terminology or Christian - what shall I say - organisation and so on. I think it is really quite foolish for us to set up as some people do, abbeys with big priors and priests, and monks, and sacrements and sacris- tans, and chapter houses and, all the rest of it! (Pause.) In themselves, there is nothing wrong with those words one might say; we might regard them as reasonably neutral despite of the historical associations but you tend to (manipulate to ?) blur with very real distinctions. This is what, I have recently coined the term 'religious or spiritual or psuedo spiritual homogenisation' you're just a modernised. Whereas actually you come from, your milk comes from a very different breed of cow indeed, in fact not from a different breed of cow but from a totally different creature: At one time it was suggested that bhikkhus wore the same dress as

Christian clergymen except that they wore a yellow dog collar. (Laughter.) Yes, it was seriously suggested some years ago. I don't think we can go into this in too much detail but clearly we have to be aware of the past, aware of the lessons of the past and try to learn from them.

_____ Could I ask a sort of related question here? I did hear it said by somebody that you 'felt that the early~~ sangha suffer~ed from a lack of centralis'ation. Did you in fact say that and...

_____ : I think you were talking about it in relation to the Order and the Western Buddhist Order.

S: I might have said something like that. I was not thinking of sort of organisational centralisation in the sense that there ought to be someone at the centre giving everybody else whatever they were. But it would seem that there were not sufficient arrangements for monks to meet together ~n 'sufficiently large numbers; there might have been practical difficulties. There may not have been the lay support for them to do that. But it would seem that there were not many occasions when the monks from all 'over northern India came together. So therefore they tended to diverge and become more and more different due to lack of contact with one another. That might have been due to lack of facility or transport and so on and so forth. That's the sort of thin~ I was thinking about.

Subhuti: You talked in the context of the degeneration of ordination standard~, a failure to maintain the standards of ordination.

S: Yes. That's an example of that divergence. I mean a little, say, group of monks in, say, a remote part of the country could have started accepting people into the Order for very dubious reasons. If they weren't having contact with bhikkhus in other areas, that might not have become obvious 'for generations. But had they had regular contact with a lot of other bhikkhus, well the other bhikkhus will have started noticing the very inferior calibre of the young bhikkhus who were coming from such and such

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area and would presumably try to do something about that.

Subhuti: There is a series of questions on Christianity.

S: Yes, you mention Christianity; just a little point occurs from Rere. The Cistercian Order had an interesting system because they spread very rapidly in Europe and of course it was almost the lifetime of St Bernard. They had a system of visitation Their head monastery sent visitors to all the others to check that their standards were being maintained. But also what was interesting, the headquarters itself - the head monastery at Cluny - was itself visited. Certain of the other monasteries held the responsibility of jointly visiting the headquarte~

itself to make sure that visiting was maintained there too which is quite interesting. So there was this sort of system of mutual visitation you might say to help maintain standards.

Kulamitra: On the subject of Christianity. You seemed to assume in the series that Christianity is a spent force, almost dead. Do you still hold that view in the light of the things like the Fundamentalist revival in America?

S: It depends 1) what one means by Christianity and 2) what one means by 'alive' and what one means by 'a force'. One gets surprisingly different pictures from different sources. I've recently been reading a book called: "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Church", written by - it's not clear whether he is an ex-Jesuit or not but he's certainly been a Jesuit, an intellectual Jesuit professor for many years - and he believed that the Church is in dramatic decline. He is speaking of course of the Church as an organisation and he does also believe that the Church as an organisation is really a betrayal of primitive Christianity and he believes that betrayal started with the donation of Constantine to pope Silvester when the Church started acquiring material wealth, territory, political power, and he believed it's gone on ever since. The decline of the Church in that sense has definitely set in in his opinion during the reign of the previous pope Paul since that pope John the 23rd, and it's now absolutely irreversible. And he seemed to believe that the whole Catholic Church is really tottering on the brink of ruin. The main reason why he believes that is that the format of sort of dogmatic post-Reformation - Catholicism of the counter Reformation - has had such inroads made into it by pseudo liberalisation that it is virtually the whole structure is virtually beyond repair. He sees - John Paul the Second - (struggling to reverse this trend, having no real success whatever, and no hope of success in his view. So that's one very interesting opinion.

Sagramati : It's difficult to think of anyone else in the world who could have got the crowds that Paul got when he visited (Lourdes ?)

S: But you see the author of this book is not impressed by that - It is obvious that people do gather. He is a sort of prominent father figure. They want some sort of reassurance. But do the Catholic masses follow his teaching? What is the teaching of the Church currently which most impinges on the Catholic laity? It's the teaching about divorce, about marriage, about birth control, about abortions, and quite clearly the Catholic masses are not following the directives of the pope, even he is so vehement and so strong and

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so clear. They welcome him, are very glad to see him and they flock around him but they don't take much notice of what he says.' and he'd got no power of enforcing. And they all think ? the Church does not have the old weapons. (Pause.) Though also there is the point that the pope like many other people seemed to have developed a sort of pseudo influence through use of the mass media. I think that the fact that you have a high exposure on the mass media does not necessarily mean that you are really influential in the sense that people's actual lives are affected by what you say or what you believe. Some of the most powerful men in the world are just not known to the public at all. They are very, very big bankers, very

big business men and consultants to government and so on; those are the people very often whose views really affect our lives, not of the people who are well known to millions.

Sagramati: If the Roman Catholic Church is sort of dissolving as a power structure, do you see anything good coming out of that?

S: It's very difficult to say because the author of this book - I forget his name but I have to look - makes the point or rather he quotes somebody else making the point that whatever one might think of the Catholic Church and its teaching, its decline does leave a gap as regards ideals, ethical principles and so on, and almost anything may feel that gap. That gap so to speak has been filled by Nazism, it's been filled by Marxism and so on. And the fact that Catholic Christianity collapses at least as an organisation ~ effectively does not necessarily mean it's going to be replaced by something better, automatically replaced by something better. It would be rather naive to think that. I think if a whole continent like Western Europe, a whole civilisation, if left without effective spiritual~underp~ning so to speak, is in a very dangerous position. The author of this book is of the opinion that the whole Catholic Church is being penetrated by a sort of diluted Marxism. Apparently one of the first things~ that the present pope had to do when he became pope was to try to root out all the Marxist sympathisers in the Vatican itself. And it is also very interesting, apparently you know about Fatima and the visions that appeared to those three peasant children, you know about the three secrets of Fatima. One of them was supposed to relate - according to him - to the fact that the whole Church was being undermined from within. And I have even read somewhere else an account to which one of these messages that the virgin Mary is supposed to have said to these children, that Satan himself would sit on the throne of the popes and some even believed that that referred to John the 22nd and the Vatican council which, despite its good intentions let in all sorts of things that it had not intended to let in, in a sense was the beginning of the end. Because this author points out that at least two thirds of the bishops in the Catholic Church now, and at least two thirds of the professors of theology in the seminaries are all pseudo-liberals and tuned with Marxism. They see Christianity in a sort of social terms, they may not be sort of deeply imbued with liberation theology but there is the -- - it in so many of them. And this, according to him, has undermined the Church in the traditional sense and this is what the present pope is struggling against. He knows what he is up against, he seemed to be quite aware of that.

Subhuti: That is only one aspect of Christianity, isn't it? There is, supposed to be a very substantial revival of Evangelical Christianity~

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isn't it in America and even in this country.

S: I read it, that sort of thing, in a very general way. I see it reflected in Iran, and even in India to a limited extent because the whole process of westernisation, not to say modernisation, industrialisation, even secularisation, has proceeded so fast that people have

become a bit bewildered, they become a bit panicky even and they've started reacting, they've been made to feel insecure because so many of the familiar landmarks have been sort of removed, and they are just reacting quite blindly and going back as it were to the fundamentals of their faiths. In Iran, the Shah tried to modernise too quickly, it upset and alienated with the mass of the people, the peasantry and their religious leaders. So, they are sort of reverting to fundamentalist Shiite Islam. You get the same sort of thing in the States when the pace of change is too great. People are just reacting back to the old and familiar ways and digging their heels in. In Britain, we haven't had much of that because in Britain modernisation and industrialisation have been very slow processes over several centuries. In some countries, they've been trying to do that sort of thing in a generation or two. You have a bit of it in India where you do get a very reactionary kind of Hindu cultural political movement. I think that you don't always realise how in some ways backwards-like much of America is, lot of people there live in small towns and they've got a small town mentality and they feel a lot of their values threatened by the liberals of the eastern seaboard and they've really started reacting against all that, and going back to what they feel as sort of fundamental, digging their heels in. And I think that does contribute to a degree to all these fundamentalist sects.

Abha a: So do you see that as a temporary phase what people get used to whilst change is taking place in society?

S: I am not sure about that; it would be nice to think so but I am not so sure it's just a passing phase, especially perhaps in the States. It's what they, I believe they're now called the 'moral majority'. You've got a toss of it in this country but not I think all that much or we've been 'moral' all the time.'

Subhuti: So in a way, the situation in () ? it relates to the decay of Christianity whereas this 'moral majority' is the backlash because of that decay in a sense. You see what I mean?

S: It's the backlash against those very factors which have brought about the decay of that Catholic Church., yes. And then again I think the so-called revival of religion in Poland or in the Soviet Union has got quite a different meaning because it's the only big alternative organisation so protests naturally tend to find expression through that. So I don't take the revival of, or strength of Catholicism in Poland or Orthodox Christianity in Russia very seriously because we see that as a common pattern, whether a church which it has very often got in a well organised structure, does very often become the sort of instrument of protest against an all oppressive regime.

Kulamitra: Even in a sort of general sense, although often people don't actually do what the Church - - say they ought to do, they still have a very strong attachment to Christianity. They're often prepared to sort of bend and () as long as

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they can actually think of themselves as a Christian. In that sense also I thought Christianity

has certainly not yet died out in this country.

_____ And most people actually want to be told what to do. Whether they do it or not is a different thing but I think they want to, most people (?) exactly want to be told what to do.

S: I think a lot of people have a sort of vague perception of the need of some sort of moral values, a vague perception in some sort of way that the Church or Christianity is the guardian of those but it's very, very vague and they certainly would not in most cases let that get seriously in the way of anything they really wanted to do. But they like the idea of sort of it all being in the background and sort of vaguely and comfortably safeguarding or guaranteeing, or supporting their whole present way of life; in a way almost sanctifying it and making it O.K. Just as - In the case of the woman who wants a church wedding. It makes this whole rather unpleasant business of sex and all that sort of thing, O.K.: It's got a blessing from the higher powers. (Pause.) I think as regards this country we don't have much to bother about as regard Christianity, certainly not as regard active opposition. I think in the United States, it's quite a different matter; Christianity is much stronger there, of a sort. You can argue it's not real Christianity but anyway something that goes by the name of Christianity is quite strong, and well organised and you might find it constituting a serious-obstacle to your Buddhist activities, at least in some areas. You might even encounter active opposition and activities which you probably wouldn't in this country, even in a village providing that you were reasonably discrete let us say, you did not go out of your way to offend people or (flout ?) their prejudices.

Abhaya: In what sense historically speaking is Christianity a universal religion apart from the fact that it has a single founder and it is not restricted to one race and it is possible to be converted to it and, secondly, has your view of Christianity in terms of the lecture changed since you gave the lecture?

S: I think if one reads the gospels, one certainly does find the elements of the idea of the individual and the life of the individual; perhaps not so much the growth, but the life of the individual being important. So I think one can see that as belonging to what I call universal religion. But that has certainly not been made the basis of organised Christianity, not been made the basis of the life of the Church since the occasion I mentioned when the western Church at last acquired political power. That element has been there all the time if one sort of chose to recognise it, and has inspired exceptional people from time to time, but they seemed not to have had any great or lasting influence on the official Church as it were. In fact in some cases they were persecuted by that Church. So I think the Church of history - I am thinking mainly of the Roman Catholic Church - the Church of history from say the 4th century onwards can't really be described as genuinely and fully representing a universal religion but I think in the gospels one can certainly find the outline of something like a universal religion. Recently I've been reading Tolstoy - I've been reading his book 'My Religion' and he certainly concentrates on these elements and does come up with something very much like a universal religion, something in some ways - quite like Buddhism, with which he was not unacquainted by the way..

But he was very much aware that those more simple and direct and more genuinely universal teachings had been overlaid by the doctrines and doctrinals of the Church for a period of at least fifteen hundred years. But one can't deny that there was something of a universal nature there for those who cared to try to investigate and who could recognise that. They usually were not given much encouragement by the Church authorities. Think for instance of St Francis, he was very lucky not to have been regarded as a heretic because he believed in what he called 'apostolic poverty' and the Church maintained that it was a heresy to believe or to teach that Christ had taught either the necessity or even the desirability of absolute poverty. (Pause.) So if you did try to take certain of the more universal teachings ascribed to Christ seriously and practice them, you ran the risk of being persecuted in some cases by the Church. So I think that you might say that Christianity from being potentially or at least to some extent or one might even say to a great extent a universal religion very quickly became an ethnic religion, a group religion of a very extreme type. (Pause.) Well, it took on the form of a papal monarchy, what is sometimes called 'Caesaro Papism'! So I am not sure whether my views about Christianity have changed, in some ways they change every time I read a new book about it because it's a very complex phenomenon and one can't overlook the fact that (whatever?) disastrous the Church as a whole might have been, they were individual Christians who were excellent people and who did their best under very difficult conditions, people like St Francis. Some were much less well known than he was.

Vairocana: Did not you say Bhante that you felt at one time that Christianity was intolerant from the very beginning, you felt that....

S: Yes, to the extent that it is a sort of continuation of Judaism. Taking the Gospels as one finds them, one does find an element of that intolerance in saying attributed to Christ himself. I am still reading this book by Tolstoy - he has not come around to those things yet, I am not sure how he would deal with them if at all.

_____ What about Gibbons? Will he give some sort of reason for the spread of early Christianity?

S: Gibbons' account is in those two famous chapters, it's very, very interesting. And in my view in some ways he comes very close to the truth. It's a very complex argument as it were; I don't think I could summarise it. Even though they were written more than 200 years ago, they are well worth reading. And he shows in a way what one might regard as quite unusual, quite unexpected spiritual sensitivity. He is aware of the deeper issues involved. It is not a purely superficial rationalist 'enlightenment', inverted commas, approach. Those two chapters are very well worth reading and sort of pondering in a way. He does do some sort of justice to early Christianity in his own way, it's certainly not a narrowly, sort of rationalist approach by any means. I've not read it for many years but that's my recollection of these two chapters.

_____ Which two chapters are they?

_____ Fifteen and sixteen.

S: I've got them upstairs. They are extremely well written, very balanced and they do

sort of justice to many quite complex issues.

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He gives in the main certain reasons for the success of Christianity.

Subhuti: The next question is from Ratnaprabha. You've dealt with to some extent. Can't Christianity be used by us?

Ratnaprabha: Yes, this partly has been done (inaudible.) If Christianity has so largely degenerated into an ethnic religion, would it perhaps be worthwhile to try to appropriate or influence ethnic Christianity, accepting that it is likely to be with us for a while, as a provider of a well routed ethnic religion for the masses in a healthy sense.

S: Let's take this bit by bit.

Ratnaprabha: So, if Christianity has so largely degenerated into an ethnic religion...

S: Interrupting: Ah no. 'Degenerated into an ethnic religion', one has to be quite clear what is meant by that. Christianity degenerated in a number of different ways, one could say. When one speaks of it degenerating into an ethnic religion, one means degenerating into something which sanctifies purely group values, which means by implication values which are inimical to those values represented by the individual. (Pause.) Then, the question proceeds?

Ratnaprabha: I should say, this is based on your suggestion: a basic healthy ethnic religion is actually a healthy thing in society.

S: But must one not make a distinction between an ethnic religion which has never as it were produced - or an ethnic religion which is innocent of any universalist development and ethnic religion so-called which has once upon a time been a universal religion but has degenerated. Can one really compare the two things? I think that is rather doubtful. Because look for instance at the attitude of Christianity as an ethnic religion to such matters as sex, the family, marriage; are they comparable with so to speak 'pagan' attitudes? I don't think it's quite such a simple matter as perhaps the question implies. There are several things that can be said also. I am afraid I am not producing the points in any sort of logical order; it's all rather jumbled up but you have to sort that out. I have been thinking recently that one could make some use of Christianity, not treating it as an ethnic religion but treating it just as poetry, not to say fairy tales. This is not a new idea by any means; Schopenhauer has put forward this point of view - years and years ago; Matthew Arnold in 'Religion and Dogma' I think it was. One can take the view that the dogmas of Christianity are not to be taken as dogmas but are to be taken as symbols. What I am really getting at, what I have been thinking even quite recently is that perhaps we should treat Christianity as just the myths of Christianity, the mythology of Christianity, just like we treat the mythology of ancient Greece and Rome. We don't believe in it as dogma but some of the stories are quite beautiful and there is no reason why we should not appropriate them especially as represented in the fine arts. There are all sorts of beautiful Christian symbols, why should not we make use of those as symbols using them to illustrate our own points of view. For instance, take up the very beautiful symbol of the annunciation, the angel Gabriel appearing to the virgin Mary. Well, one can make quite a lot of that from a Buddhist point of view. I mean by way of illustration,

you can

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in a sense work it in, and you have no sort of real connection with orthodox official Christianity by virtue of your doing that. I think that the danger comes in when you try to sort of connect it doctrinally or to equate doctrines or even to incorporate doctrines. But supposing you were giving a lecture and you wanted to emphasise the importance of effort and self-sacrifice for the sake of humanity, you could easily cite Prometheus - the myth of Prometheus. And that does not mean that you are mixing up ancient Greek religion with Buddhism or diluting Buddhism, no. You are simply using using that beautiful old myth or legend or symbol - call it what you will do - to illustrate your point. In the same way, you can make use of David and Goliath or Daniel in the lion's den or the baptism of Christ, just take their-I was going to say 'surface'symbolical meaning but a symbol does not really have just a surface meaning - but just ignore all the Christian doctrine which is associated with the symbols, just take as it were the symbols especially as they've been as it were pre-digested for you by great artists. You can even refer to a specific picture, a particular artist's treatment of a particular theme. (Pause.) So I think this might be a worthwhile approach because it does make a sort of emotional connection, not just with Christianity as such - or perhaps not with Christianity as such at all - but with the Western cultural heritage.

_____ : Like the picture of (?)

S: That's right, yes. Because, that's not even Christian; it's from the Jewish apocrypha; it's an old Hebrew tale adapted apparently from Babylonian sources. Yes, the fact that it appears in the Old Testament, in the bible of the Christians, why should one not make use of it. So, yes, one can make use of the imagery so to speak of Christianity to illustrate one's own specifically Buddhist point of view.

Subhuti: I don't think the same (course ?) applies when using abbots and sacristans and so forth.

S: No, I don't think so at all. I can't quite justify this logic or at least I am quite well without it. It does seem quite acceptable in the way that abbots and crosiers and mitres and all the rest of it, aren't.

_____ : Myths seem to be quite universal really.

S: Yes, yes.

_____ It's the same things reoccurring (now and then?)

_____ : You said in The Journey to Il Covento that through the image, you contact the archetype.

S: Yes. You could even have a string of images to make it quite clear. You could refer not only to Gabriel announcing himself so to speak to the virgin Mary but the (Char of which use to send ? I mean cite two or three such myths from. different religions to make it

quite clear that you work through them approaching an archetype and that that archetype was of some significance from the Buddhist point of view.

Abhaya : So Christian symbols at least might be appropriated but the question went actually a bit further in our discussion in that

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it were concerned about the fact that the West is as it were lacking a healthy ethnic religion ~or the majority of people.

s:(interrupting.) Let me say one thing before we come on to that. This only just occurred to me that it's partly the symbols that (arose ?), the symbols - by that I mean the traditional representations of Christian mythology-are the only universal thing in orthodox Christianity. Because really it's only the Church did not realise that, fortunately, you can actually see that universal element in some of these basic myths and symbols of Christianity. You see what I am getting at. It's as though half the work has been done for you already. I mean perhaps the Christian~Church did not realise the extent to which, the strength of those so-called Christian symbols was derived from sort of archetypal sources which transcended Christianity as a separate religion; archetypes which manifest at least in a certain level in practically all religions perhaps. (Pause.) There is no reason why one should not incorporate those symbols which are despite their sort of Christian surface basically universal were they effective at all, into one's exposition of Buddhism. (Pause.) Anyway, what was Ratnaprabha's~next question? (Laughter.)

Ratnaprabha: In our discussion what we were concerned about - at least what I was concerned about - was the fact that the West seemed to be lacking a healthy ethnic religion for the majority of the population to follow and to be a basis for a universal religion perhaps for a minority to follow. Now, you suggested in a lecture I think, that perhaps slightly tongue in cheek a revival of Celtic paganism. But if that is not suitable because we are so cut off from it, then the thing that we are not cut off from in terms of our roots is Christianity. So, this is how the question arose in my mind. Is there any way in which we can make use of the fact that we are not cut~off from Christianity to produce a healthy ethnic religion.

S: I am really very doubtful whether official Christianity does include that sort, I mean the pagan or ethnic level so to speak in that sort of sense. Maybe it does exist here and there, say round the~diter-\ranean in the name of Christianity but really as a survival from earlier pagan times. Just as you have saints who were really baptised pagan gods and heroes and so on. It would seem almost as though we can't put the clock back. I think it's quite difficult to be a pagan and sort of really get away from Christian influences in the West. You can perhaps be brought up without Christianity impinging on you very much but then there is no healthy pagan substitute. So I think we are in a quite difficult position in this respect. You have got dancing around the may pole and you have got morris dancing in some villages. Does that all really help? Is it enough? When I was leaving in Castle Acre we had the morris dancers -

half a dozen elderly gentlemen (?) with bells and things and (?) dancing ~n the village green an afternoon for the benefit of the American tourists.' (Pause.) I don't think we've got any sort of ready made paganism to hand and ~.accessible that we can make use of as an alternative to that missing genuinely or originally ethnic element in Christianity itself. It's present in Christianity only I think in the form of survival from pagan times.

Could you give some characteristics of this 'paganism'?

S: I think one of the characteristics is a. non-alienation from the Tife of the earth itself. Don't forget that Official Christianity . teaches tThat

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the earth was cursed for man's sake as a result of the fall. So if you see the earth through Christian spectacles, you don't sort of see unfallen earth, in a way the earth has fallen too. (Pause.) The earth is somehow evil because nature is evil. Nature is bound up with the devil. The devil is behind it. This is the sort of sometimes unformulated Christian approach or attitude. Everything natural is almost of the devil. God created it good but then it's become corrupt due to man's fall. People may not actually~believe that doctrine now but that sort of feeling about nature is still there and also that feeling of exploitation of nature deriving from the Old Testament. I think that Paganism basically is a feeling of oneness with nature. Feeling that you are part of nature and that nature is something healthy and good and 'natural' in a word, and innocent. And that you - to the extent that you are part of that - also are sort of natural and healthy and innocent. I think this is the essence of what I call Paganism.

_____ You do suggest in the lecture that perhaps as Christianity declines in influence, a sort of a new Paganism is an increasing influence and you relate this to the permissive society. Would you still say that?

S: I think that was a bit 'tongue-in-cheek'. I think we had to educate ourselves a bit. Formally~it was naive, almost unconscious. But I don't think that would be possible now except perhaps in the case of very young children who were brought up properly under favourable conditions. I think now we have to re-educate ourselves into a proper sort of rapport with nature, a feeling for nature, what is left of it. (Pause.)

Subhuti: We've have got a series of questions on this subject which we sort of half covered but we can go through them. Padmavajra's got one.

Padmavajra: I think you cut on it but I read the question.

S: Go through them quite quickly.

Padmavajra: You mentioned the importance of us making contact with our pagan roots, Paganism being no longer a living tradition. I wonder what that means in practice for us

now.

S: Pagan roots. Perhaps it's not a very happy expression in some ways. Do we have 'pagan roots' in a real psychological sense? I do remember somebody who certainly was not Celtic by origin referring to his celtic background.' (In a way that's neither here nor there.) But 'pagan roots Is the child a 'pagan'? The child is to some extent if its parents let it be a pagan. I think that getting back to one's own pagan roots, if one can speak in those terms { ?), getting that level of one's own consciousness, one's own experience, one does have some kind of sympathy with nature, some sort of feeling of oneself as part of nature so that one can really empathise with that, with nature. And if the study of extinct ethnic religions or ancient pagan mythology helps one to experience that, that's good. Otherwise it's just mere archeology and not really of much use or value.

_____ Another question.

In your mention of the influence of Paganism you seem to welcome the emergence of permissiveness. Would you do so now?

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Would you do so now? Is permissiveness...

S: No. That was tongue-in-cheek. Permissiveness is one extreme, what's the other extreme?

Subhuti: Repression.

S: Repression is the other. Perhaps it did seem at one time - I am just trying to think back(properly) - that permissiveness did represent some sort of liberation but the events have shown that it did not represent much of a liberation at all. Those of you who were alive in the - or active better say - in the permissive sixties or is it the fifties.

Voices: Sixties.

S: How do you feel about it? I had only just come back from India and there was not a very permissive atmosphere at the Hampstead Buddhist Vihara I can assure you! (Laughter,)Not even at the Buddhist Society strange to say. (More laughter.)

.1 am afraid it passed me by.

I was too drunk to remember. (Laughter.)

S: There you are; permissive society.

_____ It's confusing I think. be S: That you won't/told what to do anymore. You were just allowed to to it. At least no one could stop you. You must remember!

(Laughter.)

Abhaya: It (?) hit a lot of the hippies; they were at loose ends and quite stagnant. It's the impression I've got with some exceptions obviously.

S: But it seems that people who were into that as it were permissive society just went to extreme~ No doubt there were certain restrictions but it was good that they should be liberated from them, or anybody should be liberated from them. The tendency seemed to be to think that no sort of restriction, no sort of restraint~, no sort of discipline even no sort of ethical standard was valid any more. (Pause.)

_____ In a way we are still living in that age, are we? We are living in a permissive society.

S: It's connected with pseudo-liberalism. Yes I think we are actually.

_____ All the talk~'rights' is very much bound up with permissive society I think. Tolstoi I find is very keen on this topic that yo~ have no rights at all~ none at all. You've only got all sorts of advanta~~s that you- ought to be jolly well thankful for and you've. no right at all to talk about rights! The fact that you are alive - you've done nothing about it according to him because he does not believe in karma and rebirth; you've done nothing to merit just life. It just con~jured as a free gift from some unknown source. How can you possibly claim any rights? Your time is sufficiently occupi~ed just saying thank you for all the things that you've got,. especially he says,- the right, the blessing, of-work..

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Subhuti: Can we pursue this topic of roots a bit further. Kulamitra has got a question.

Kulamitra: Yes. Is there any way we can consciously cultivate our ethnic roots within society that would.- support.the -growth of the spiritual community?

S: I was going to say 'you could keep a potted plant!' or a cat. That's as near to it as we can get. (?) I think usually. But any way; just ask that again.

term Kulamitra: In this sense I was using the~thnic in the sense that you use ethnic religion but may be thinking that there might be things that might be not strictly religious. Things in our society that we could cultivate that would be on the possitive group level...

S: This just occurs- to me in passing; I have not sort of thought about it before. We could celebrate the seasons more; we could have say a :aid-Winter festival and. a Spring festival and make much more of it. Of course we are going to feel very sort of self conscious and foOlish at first but we get used to it. (I am sure?) for instance Suvajra would love to dance round the May pole. (Laughter.)

Suvajra: In Manchester, the Sam~ata Centre - -- the major hobby is Morris dancing.

S: I know people love bonfires, don't they? We could have things like ~..... may be we could do something in that connection. At least a mid-Winter festival and a Spring festival. The Tibetans make much of their New Year festival- they are Buddhists and they give it a sort of Buddhist colouring but it does definitely come from their pre-Buddhist pagan roots one might say. Horse racing. Apparently that was very popular, it's a very big part of the Tibetan new year celebration. It had nothing to do with to do with Buddhism originally~because they were nomads - and horses were very -important to them. But they interpreted it as helping to speed the coming of Maitreya! (Laughter.) But it's just horse racing in honour of .t~e. new year~so to speak.

Do you feel that order members should spend their time involving themselves in organising activities such as these things Bhante?

S: I think you can leave it to the mitras and join in it when they Tnvite you. You can be invited as an honoured guest on those occasions by the mitras and friends, that's fine but at present I think order members activities have better going into the Dharma. But you can certainly encourage such things and smile, a benevolent fatherly smile at all the mitras who get up to these sort of things! Just turn up for half an hour to make sure things don't get too much out of hand. By the way I do not regard parties - especially mixed parties - as pagan ethnic religious activities in this sense heither do I regard any form of mother worship as -such~as'- ~nui'ne pagan root (laughter.) '(Pause.) I tend to believe the holding of parties and mother worship are quite closely related.

_____ Do you think that encouraging arts activities comes into this sort of same level of contacting society but in a way which is not quite on the spiritual level.

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S: It's rather different, I think it's in a way on a more refined level. Yes, certainly a lot of people are drawn to the arts and could be drawn into spiritual life through the arts because for many people, especially those who don't find themselves very ready to believe in Christianity, the arts have increasingly become a substitute for religion. Not necessarily in the sense that I've described in my little book, booklet on The Religion of Art, in a sense that falls rather short of that but nonetheless it's a point of contact and the arts are important to people and it is not very diffi- cult to lead people from a serious preoccupation with the arts into a serious consideration of human life itself and the purpose of life and the individual. I think it's very good that there is the arts - the centre down' in Croydon and whiie~there are also activities of that sort in the Annexe in East London. I think we should very much encou- rage these things. I think we oug~0~o have a sort of Catholic approach; I think we have if I may say so. I think we should not be too 'Blooms- bury' oriented!

_____ What then?

S: Well we should not be too Bloomsbury oriented. There are the pre- Raphaelites, one of my

other favourites ! (Laughter.)

_____ You ought to write to Padmaraja and tell him what you want.

S: ObTthat would keep you all busy for ten years! (Laughter.)

Kulamitra: Well...

We've got to be kept busy.

Subhuti: You've still got a question from (?)

I think it's has been answered.

S: But it's not a very easy matter this- quest ion' 6f .pagan,roots~a and all that, is it? We could cultivate an appreciation of nature more; the Zen Buddhists 'do -that. I mentioned that Japanese Zen poet last night; he is a very good example of that. His appreciation of nature is completely integrated with his approach to the Buddhist, the spiritual life, integrated with his Buddhism.

_____ One can (?)

S: Yes indeed. Provided you are not too preoccupied with the commercial side of the business! You have to be of course but... (Pause.)

Subhuti: We move on to some other religions.

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Subhuti : So, the first question is from Sagramati on the ...

S: Before you start, have you got a lot of questions or...

Subhuti We've got sixteen questions, some of them may cancell each othero~t(~right oh.). But r~ wonder actually whether~people should not be more disciplined rather than sort of adding questions to questions because we've got quite a lot... (S: O.K.) Yes, the first one is from Sagramati on the 'pajapati' criteria.

Sagramati: In the Buddha's reply to Mahapajapati, He seems to be communicating a principle'of 'how to judge what is the Dharma and what is not~1 Should not this principle be qualified with regard to who uses it as it is a basis for all sorts of rationalisations, i.e. what is good for my development. Should we make something clear when we use that principle?

S: That means of course making very clear what development means. Development is not simply what's good for you in a vague general subjective sort of way. So really a sort of clarification of the notion of development is needed. We did go into this very question in

Tuscany, last year. This w~o(e confusion that arises when people try to justify doing what they want to do in terms of its being 'good for their development'. People say things like 'I think I'd better start up a relationship, I think it would be good for my development!' So, yes, I think we do need to be much clearer about what 'development' actually means. It does consist in a natural progression from lower to higher states of consciousness and that progression can be checked, in a way, in various ways; that you become as it were less attached to material things, less concerned about your own self and so on and so forth.

Sagramati: I was thinking more in terms of? what qualifies you (?) is that you are committed. Of course a 'person who is really committed to the spiritual life~in a sense~ i~ ~osn9 t0~h~v~ some idea of how to apply the principle whereas someone who is not committed obviously would not.

S: You must have some idea, theoretical idea, of a transcendental principle towards the realisation of which, the attainment of which, your efforts are directed; and development means approximation to that particular goal. It is not development in a sort of vague therapeutic sort of sense. Perhaps you should refer to that discussion we had in Tuscany. I think that the topic - I don't know if anybody was there last year... Oh, you were. That topic came up more than once, didn't it? Do you remember?

P~~~~v~ira: I can remember you saying that- about rationalisation... but I can't think of the particular tape, I would have to go through my notes.

S: But anyway, I think that that point can be taken. That one needs to clarify the whole notion of development, make it much more precise, more truly Buddhistic and more definitely oriented in the direction of the transcendental. so that people, are not able to use the language of development to ~u~~st~fy" them in doingkw~~~~ they want to do regardless of whether it is skilful or unskilful.~~Because you can even argue

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that something unskilful is good for your development in the long run because it's something you need to get out of your system, or that you need to have done with or to get over. Some people might argue they need to get angry; in the long run that would be good for their development; or they need to get really into sex for a few years because that would be good for their development etc, etc. Or it would be good for them to do nothing for a while or it would be good to have a holiday in Greece because it would be good for their development. You hear these sorts-o-f-things endlessly. It's only an example of the universal religion becoming an ethnic religion. You've learned the language; you know what sort of language is the accepted language; you know what sort of language meets with approval. And you want to meet with approval and at the same time you want to do what you want to do, so you describe what you want to do," using the language which you know is accepted, and which will meet with approval. This is what happens. So I think one has to be constantly on the watch against that sort of thing. (Pause.) I meet even, especially in letters which people write to me, with curious examples quite devious examples. Let's take as an example someone who's got really fed up with working in a co-op, they're really sick of it, they want to

get shot of the whole business~as quickly as they can. They don't write and say to me 'Bhante, I am fed up with working in a co-op, I am going to give it up.' They say: 'Bhante, I went to Vajraloka, I was there for a few days and itc~~~~ upon me that I was becoming really much too attached to my: ~drking in the co-op! I really need to work on my detachment, so though I really like working in the co-op and am not too happy about giving it up, nonetheless I think in the interest of becoming more detached I ought to give it up.' Yes, this is actually the sort of letter I get but believe it or not I can see right through~~iri~aughter.) So, I reply accordingly, but yes it is all translated in a sort of pseudo positive language as though you are very nobly doing the right thing even though it's very difficult but actually you are doing the O,?C thing you want to do which is sometimes quite unskilful. I (laughter) sdetmetimes ... no I won't give any more examples... (laughter) that's quite enough and we must deal with other questions no doubt, but I do get letters exactly like that sometimes.

Subhuti : The next one is still on that criteria from Ratnaguna.

Ratnaguna: are ar~~ things in u~usdadhdisinfi ~~~ilc~ty~Jue 4~han!zc k}~eere should not take on or which you rejected from Our ...

S: interrupting: You mean the Dharma itself or in Buddhism as it historically developed in different countries?

R~una: I took you from- the lecture to mean 'Doctrine's & Practices of Buddhism.' I don't know what that means.

S: Ah, well put it in this way. Let's take the Dharma itself to begin with. Let's say take the example of meditation. Let's take say the Forty kama-tanhas. We may well find in the West that among those kama-tanhas, there were some which are very useful to us - like the Mindfulness of Breathing, the Mettabhavana but others - like the contemplation of the loathsomeness of -'foOd" which are not useful.~ to us at all. So we should feel quite free to put aside those practices which are not useful to us; which we do not find actually help us in our spiritual life; we should feel quite free

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to do that. So this is not rejection; we recognise that that teaching or practice of contemplation of the loathsomeness of food may well be useful for dther people, in other times or other parts of the world but itdoesnot happen to be useful to us. So we don't criticise it or we don't say that it is a bad practice, we just put it aside; for us it is not relevant, not at the moment. You see? That's one thing with regard to something which is actually a part of the Dharma. On the other hand there are teachings or practices which

are part of traditional Buddhism, as actually practiced, which may not be of that category; they may represent much more specialised developments tied up with the culture of a particular country, developments which we indeed need not take on, they may even in some cases be quite opposed to the spirit of the Dharma, even though passing as part of Buddhist tradition. Those of course we should not merely put aside but even in a sense actually reject. (Pause.)

Ratnaguna: My question was actually 'what practices ~n~ doctrine~ have you definitely rejected or put aside?' but I suppose we could take it as anything that we ~ c~~~ not
Jotn °~

S: Not necessarily because there are some things perhaps we have not got around to doing because we are not ready for those particular things. (Pause.) I can't think of any ~fli~~ doctrine which we don't find useful to the extent that we have been able to put it into practice. Of course I can think of teachings which traditional Buddhism has neglected which we have put into practice more like the teaching of the twelve positive nidanas, that's the same sort of thing in reverse as it were. We certainly don't accept the exaggerated formalistic monasticism of some forms of Buddhism. We believe in what we've called, semi-monasticism - which is not a very good term - we believe in the spirit of monasticism but not in merely formal monasticism. Keeping up an appearance of monasticism, keeping up an appearance of world renunciation when that is not really the reality of one's life. To give you an extreme example, we may, for instance be not quite happy with the tathagata-garbha doctrine. We might feel that it's a doctrine which could be misunderstood so easily that we just put aside or we might even sometimes doubt whether it is really a valid development of Buddhist teaching; Buddhists in the East have sometimes doubted that without necessarily being Hinayanist; ~rne Mahayana ~teacher~s have doubted whether the tathagata-garbha doctrine is really fully in accordance with the central Buddhist tradition. So you can say that we can make a distinction whether ... first of all, in the case of what seems to be the Dharma itself, those teachings which are 'simply not relevant. In the case of the Dharma itself, there are no teachings which are actually as it were undesirable, obviously; or against the spirit of the Dharma. And then with regard to later historical forms of Buddhism, there are again teachings which are not relevant to us; teachings which are dubiously Buddhist and teachings or practices which are definitely un-Buddhist or - anti-Buddhist. For instance, if you found yourself in Sri Lanka, and you found that some Buddhists or even some bhikkhus were practicing some form of caste discrimination, you could not possibly go along with that and so on. You find for instance that some Buddhists were practicing non-vegetarianism; they believe that that is in accordance with the teaching of the Buddha. There again one does not accept that. But ~I don't think that there any major universally accepted Buddhist teachings that we ourselves do not accept and, to the best of our ability, try to put into practice. - (pause.)

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~ubhuti : Padmavajra has one one-way of teaching or ~ ov' way of

teaching~more stress

Pa~r~v~j~: I thought I wasntgoing to ask that.-- O.~.

Padmavajra: This is in connection with Sagramati's point. I was wondering if perhaps you have any views on whether perhaps we can be more definite in our line - if you like - on the Dharma andtLe~ ~VA~ we put ourselves across.

S: Can you be more specific?

Padmavajra: It was a bit L~fl r~Lcttton~ to Sussidhi's point yesterday that people like being told what to do. Not that y~e ~o round telling people what to do but I was just wone~erinq if we could give a more definite lead to people, even new peopt~, with definitions of development such as -

S: I think it's a question... I was going to say it's rather-a question of skilful means but perhaps I could elaborate on that and say it's more a question of knowledge and skilful means. because first of all ydu must yourself have that more precise and definite knowledge at your disposal and then of course you must be sufficiently skilful to be able to put it across in the right sort of way and also to appreciate when it is relevant and when it is not. For instance a very new person might say: what is the Buddhist attitude towards -what i~s usually called 'selfishness', looking after yourself, consi- dering your well being. Well, you should not then go onto a long discourse on the Buddhist anatta teaching and its development in the Mahayana - however accurate that might be - you have to be a bit sensitive to the actual situation. But in the case of say some one who has been coming along for quite a while and who's got some idea about all that, it might be appropriate to go into all that more deeply. But I think the sooner people do have a more precise and accurate understanding of Buddhist teaching the better; the more solid a basis they will have for their actual practice but you must be careful not to overwhelm people with doctrinal teachin~too early. (Pause.) I get the definite impression that what the majority of people are looking for to begin with or at least what they respond to most positively is a very sincere emotio~~nally posit~iwe friendl? approach on the part of order members, mitras and ordinary friends. It is that Whi~h seems to draw them and to hold them even. But nonetheless one should as s~on as one can, clarify doctrinal concepts as well as of course removing or dissipating the familiar old mic~cha-ditthis. (Pause.) And also~6nwedouse ambiguous terms, or terms of no fixed meaninglor terms that are used by people outside the FWBO cr1 ~ much looser sense like the term 'development'. We mus~ introduce clarity in the use of such terms as quickly as we can. (Pause.)

Subhuti . S~NJo~~has a question on the development of the

ooCCe~&~we Cevet ~6'a~ to6s~~ tke q~~t~fon ~fl~~a~.

~ht4~LoIc~ In the question and answer session after the first lecture, you remarked that I'd been no real overall development in the level of consciousness since the emergence of human consciousness half a million years ago. In both of the r'.rst recent lectures -you co:t~~n -ted that Buddhism as the path of higher evolution will only ever be for a minority,

for a few. So there is three closely connected questions arising out of this. Does this mean it's a mistake to think in terms of there ever

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being a general rising level of consciousness which, .0...

S: (interrupting) . .in a way it's a mistake to think in terms of a general collective rise in the level of consciousness. Do you see the point of the distinction? Because if someone who is say on the level of group or collective consciousness rises, he can only rise by becoming an individual. He rises above the general collective level of consciousness. He cannot do anything else if he rises... so you cannot have a general level of collective consciousness above that which has already been attained. What you can have is a general level of individual consciousness which is quite a different thing. That would mean that what was formerly the group has been entirely transformed into a spiritual community. In other words a group cannot collectively rise to a higher level of consciousness without being transformed into a spiritual community. In other words, the rise is via individuals who individually develop high levels of consciousness.

Saddhaloka: It's just that if we said that it is only ever going to be a minority, It means that is always going to be very small...

S: Yes and no. In the long run - and that's the very long run- I do not envisage the entire group being transformed into a spiritual community. That would represent almost a sort of apocalyptic transformation but it could be that in the (?) meanwhile other souls - for want of a better term - came into the picture and whereas everybody who was formerly a member of the group had now become a member of the spiritual community but meanwhile could have recruited so many many more members. So you will still be in a minority because the samsara is beginning-less. One might say that souls are perpetually being as it were produced and therefore the group in a sense maintains itself. Not in the sense of the same collection, as it were, of group units. There is also the general point that there is always a minority that leads. Supposing everyone became a stream-entrant, the leaders would then be the once-returners and the non-returners and so on. It seems you don't get everybody advancing along the same front. So, in that sense, there is always a minority in the lead and ultimately perhaps just a very very few individuals in the lead or even one individual as there was when the Buddha gained enlightenment.

Saddhaloka: That actually answered the second part of the question. Maybe you should still answer the third part. Given that, what sort of picture of evolution might we project forward over say the next two or three million years?

S: Well we can't say because for one we don't know whether there is going to be a nuclear war or a nuclear explosion or a series of nuclear explosions or not. I mean there are all sorts of imponderables like that. We don't know what new scientific inventions there are going to be. I don't anyway. I am even behind with things like computers. I can hardly tell you a computer from a typewriter. I don't think I've even... or yes I have seen a computer because

Rajabodhi showed me a computer years ago but I don't think I could recognise one if I saw one. I might mistake it for something else with knobs on: I don't know. Well one knob looks like any other knob to me, being profoundly unscientific. But if there aren't as it were catastrophic interventions of that sort, if humanity does not in fact

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bring destruction upon itself, well I think within a couple million years one could see enormous transformation. One could, if humanity is only reasonably sensible, see almost a paradise upon earth. Although still of course as far as I can anticipate, the great problem, say that of death, would have probably not been solved even though life might have been prolonged considerably~ the basic human problems -would still be there. One must not forget that. But perhaps humanity would be in a very much better position as it were collectively to solve them; which means to solve them individual-ly. In other words, the group would be much more healthy; there'd be much larger and much more vigorously flourishing spiritual community, exercising a very strong and decisive influence on the group all the time. One could foresee that sort of development within a couple of million years. I think it is definitely a possibility. It only requires a bit of common sense! (Laughter.)

Vairocana: Do you not think, Bhante, there are some theories that left to our own devices we would eventually attain Enlightenment. Is there not some sort of biological theory, but may be if we don't do that, that a person's faculties could rise through a sort of biological process - may be their thinking faculty, something like that, and may be say over millions of years they could actually, well may be in a better position to attain Enlightenment. Do you think anything like that could happen?

S: I don't think the development of the brain - taking that to mean the intellect by itself - would help very much. I am prepared to just place my reliance on a little more common sense for the time being. It seems more likely that we'll have mechanical extensions of our brains. It could be that our brains will sort of atrophy for want of use. Because -if want an answer to a certain~question~ instead of working it out by yourself taking several hours, not to say weeks or months, we'll just press a button and get the answer instantly. That would seem to be a recipe not for the development of the brain but rather the opposite. Our brain will probably go all soft and soggy for want of use! You can see it happening with some people, who don't have occasion to use their brains, they don't develop. As in the case of people like me who don't have occasions to use their physical muscles, they don't develop. (Pause.) So probably what will happen is that we'll use these mechanical extensions of our brains to such an extent that the brain will progressively weaken and of course all the time the machines by that time will probably be self reproducing and self improving and a point will come when the human brain is actually less efficient than the the artificial brain. And then of course the artificial brain will take over. Since I don't have an artificial brain I can't predict what might happen then! (Laughter-) But you can see it happening 9ou~kflo~ We don't use our brains, we've got all these mechanical extensions so generation after generation, the human brains get weaker and all the time the mechanical brains are getting-'stronger. - - So a point must

come ~qlven s~ufficient time - when actually the human brain is less effective, less intelligent than the artificial one and then the latter will take over. It would be a fairly interesting develop- ment! It might have happen~~d with a few people already (Laughter).

Cakkhu ala: It's the subject of H.G. Wells short story 'When the macnm stops'.

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S: Ah, I haven't read that one. So then - the expression 'software' will probably refer to the human brain, and 'hardware' will correspond to the mechanical intelligence. (Laughter.) Anyway, that's all by-the-by. I can see Subhuti looking at me:

Subhuti : Padmavajra on 'corroleation of augmentation and dialect'.

S: Padmavajra lies awake at night thinking up these questions: (Laughter.) H~ ha~oL~ very little sleep in Tuscany~

Padmavajra: In Tuscany last year you mentioned the process of (you started that, you mentioned it) the process of spiritual development can be described as a dialectical one. The spiral path is described as a process of augmentation. jow°cLoe~ spiritual development CLs dial- ectic and spiritual development ds augmentation ft late~

S: I think that when I was speaking of spiritual life as a dialectical process, I~ea~that it veered first to this extreme, then the opposite extreme, then you came back to a middle position. But not just in the middle, a middle position above the two previous opposite positions which reconcile and harmonise them. I had in the sort of thing that we had much experience of in the early days when people on retreats especially oscillated between a wrong sort of awareness, a wrong sort of mindfulness - an alienated awareness even - and over exuberance and hysterical abandon, all that sort of thing. One has eventually to arrive at a position where you are full of energy, yes, but it's a controlled energy which is completely consistent with, in fact imbued with, mindfulness and awareness. And that mindfulness and awareness is not in the least alienated but absolutely together with your physical a~d emotional energies. So, the dialectical process consists in the fact that, to begin with you try to be more mindful but you become a bit alienated so you've to loosen- up a bit, so you allow yourself to be more exuberant but then you become forgetful and unmindful and, as I said even hysterical. So you have to check youtse-lf- and again be a bit more mindful. But in this way, you go from side to side at ever higher levels, with less oscillation, and you come to rest so to speak, at the middle higher point. So I speak of this as a sort of dialectical process of spiritual life~ But the spiral seems to be really much the same thing because, in- the case of a spiral you rise from the lower to the higher level, but you don't go straight up as up a ladder, I think the spiral motion itself, the spiral movement itself is as it were 'dialectical' because you go from side to side , you make a threefold movemeht;ffit~1--s circular. It's ascending

and it's also oscillatory. So that oscillatory element in the spiral movement corresponds to what I call the 'dialectical' process in the spiritual life. So the spiral contains or suggests a dialectical movement. (Pause.)

Subhuti : Buddhapa1j~ci has a question on the intensive practical course.

~uddhapalita: You say in connection with your teaching experiences in the East and West, that the time has come to consolidate all the helpful things into a single intensive practical course with exercises, the theoretical background of which will be some of the things you covered in the lectures. Did you formulate such a course?

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*But one S: I never did. I gave it some thought but then I got taken up with other things and other thoughts. -- might even say that our Tuscany courses have in a way developed into that or our Tuscany courses represent a development into that. Because we have the complete 'bag of tricks' as it were. We have meditation, dharma study, communication, spiritual friendship, work; karate, yoga. We have all the different methods, all the different practices which we value in the FWBO and which we find genuinely useful engaging the full attention of two or three dozen people over a period of three months. So perhaps in a way we ended up in a quite practical and empirical manner with what I then had in mind. At that time I was thinking more in terms of a sort of actual course, perhaps even a weekend course or sort of short retreat but perhaps the reason why I did not give it any further thought was just the growing awareness that one could not accommodate everything in sufficient degrees, sufficient strength within the sort of time period that was then available, say a weekend or a week or even two weeks. But we can do it now, to a modest extent at least, within a three months period. But those who have been on that three months in Tuscany, while fully benefitting from it and appreciating it, can at the same time see the limitations of the three months period. They can quite easily envisage being able to do very much more in six months or in one year spent in that sort of way. (Pause.) So I think the answer is that though I did not give any further thought to that idea at the time but actually that is I think more or less what has been achieved, especially in the Tuscany courses.

Subhuti : I was quite interested in the allusion, because in what way does it differ from a retreat what you had in mind from ~ea~~~~~havin~ at that time?

S: I think what I had in mind was something just more intense just more of everything and possibly, because we were still feeling our way of other methods which we had not as yet discovered, that's true to a limited extent because we had not at that time for instance had recourse to the Six Element- practice h~~we? That's something we added to our repertoire since then. I don't remember teaching it anyway, I don't think I did. I think we've placed much more emphasis since then on spiritual friendship. I think it's only it's only perhaps in the last two or three years that people have begun to have a glimpse of what spiritual friendship really means. I think it's probably as recent as that.

_____ : Do you think were there to be say a year's course, that there would be any

elements that you would now add, to be practiced in that sort of circumstance.

S: I am not sure. I have not thought along those lines just because a year is not at the moment available. There might be a few things - that could be included. For instance - this is just off the top of my head - if for instance we had an artist on the retreat - perhaps for the benefit of those who want to develop that sort of skill, we could have a drawing class. Because over a year you could do something like that and get reasonably well into it or we might even have a Pali class if there was somebody able to teach Pali because if you had one class a week for a year, you'll end up being able to read the Dhammapada, even if you did have to consult the dictionary occasionally, you could read the Dhammapada after fifty two hours of Pali lessons; I am sure you could.

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Subhuti : Sagramati has a question on the spiral- beina operative within the lower evolution.

Sagramati: Isn't the principle of a spiral like conditionality operative from the first instance of evolution, i.e. it's operative on the collective level, rather than a principle that only manifests after a certain level of individual development or does this lead to too dualistic a view?

S: In a sense I would agree with the first proposition, but within as it were certain limitations or with certain qualifications. If one looks at the whole evolutionary process, you get.... at least T~ get a very definite sense of the emergence of something which is becoming increasingly clear and coherent. At the beginning, the very beginning of the evolutionary process you get the idea, you get the impression of a sort of fumbling; many cells start. You get the impression that it was very (?) represented at that time, was very uncertain which way to go; that it was sort of feeling around. But then, as you follow the evolutionary process further, it's as though that whatever it is that is behind the evolutionary process becomes as it were sure of itself. There are fewer false starts or fewer cul-de-sacs. Though still it's all very hit and miss, and very fragmented and very broken. Very often the thread seems to be interrupted and it's picked up again some time later. But, as you come nearer and nearer to humanity it is as though that underlying trend sort of gains confidence. And then of course with man, with the individual, it does in fact become completely self-conscious so that the individual knows exactly where he is going. And then of course after a while the spiral starts emerging. So it is as though whatever - and I am deliberately using vague language at the moment - whatever was so to speak behind the evolutionary process becomes more and more sure of its direction and eventually sort of finds itself in that spiral process. So inasmuch as there is a sort of continuous process throughout even though it is a process that is very uncertain, so to speak, very unsure of itself at the beginning, it does seem to be one process throughout. So in that sense - and that's where the limitational qualification goes - you could speak of the spiral process itself being imminent in the lower evolution, you could speak of the higher evolution being imminent in the lower evolution but you have to be careful

to make it clear that the spiral process was present (?) not in its fully developed form, by way of a very imperfect and fragmented~n~ incomplete anticipation, but one could with that qualification speak in that sort Of way. (Pause.) Just to give you a sort Of example. If you take the total, say literary product of a great writer, a great poet or novelist, his very early workS may be very imperfect, full of faults but if you trace the whole process of his life and his production you can see that what was very imperfectly and inadequately expressed in his early works finds full and perfect expression in his later works and it's as it were the same thing, the same thread. It's that~sort of thing (pause.) but to an even greater extent I might add. Subhuti : You had a second part to the question. Sagaramati : It's a question that always comes up on study courses and the like (?), What is the difference between conditionality and causality?

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S: Oh we went into this in Tuscany,didn't we? Was it last year? I went Tnto it somewhere.

Sagaramatj~: But we never had a satisfactory answer.

S: Airight. Put the question as it might be put by a new person. Sagaramati? Usually when we go through conditionality, people say well as you- or often - people whohaver~ad Th~ Survey;-you mention in The Survey that conditionality is not to be understood in the sense that it is understood in Western philo~ophy.

S: I think when the Survey was written in India, and therefor& ~ was speaking to Indians, I was thinking more in terms of Indian philo- sophy than Western philosophy because in Indian philosophy there is this distinction of satkaryavada, asatkaryavada but it would seem that in modern Western philosophy at least as regard some Western philosophers, ~specially writers on I think inductive logic, they will understand the term 'causality' more in the sense of conditionality in the Buddhist sense. So therefore one can only distinguish between 'conditionality' and 'causality' if by 'causality' one understands something like the old Indian idea of cause and effect either being identical or completely different. But some modern Western thinkers come quite close in a way to the Buddhist conception of conditionality but they call it causality or causation.

Sagaramati : I thought there might be a confusion because I know in the philosophy of science, they talk about 'conditions'.But condition is something static, it is not something that can bring about change.A change is the cause.

S: Buddhism has very much the idea of conditions arising as something dynamic or rather in dependence on certain conditions, phenomena arising and further phenomena arising in dependence on those pheno- mena. So it's in a way a much more dynamic picture. Though I must say, in the case of some writers o~ inductive logic, you do get the impression of causality or causation as a dynamic process ,not just ~~~atter of static conditions. So I think one has to be aware that quite a lot of people will understand by 'causality'

something like what we understand by 'conditionality'. Therefore will not be able to get the point of the distinction; so you need to refer back to the old Indian theories that, one theory says that cause and effect are identical. The effect is only a transformation of the cause - just like an image being a transformation of a lump of mud. Other saying that there is a complete difference between them. That simply one phenomena had succeeded another and was completely different from it. So both make causality really impossible. The middle way is the Buddhist teaching of what in dependence from A13 arises, neither absolutely the same nor completely different. Which is to some extent like the modern scientific or logical at least theory of causation. Maybe it would be good to look up one of the standard writers on logic like John Stuart Mills or like Jevans (?) or like () Reed and see what they have to say on the principle of causation, because they all do go into this, writers on inductive logic, because it is one of the basic principle of science - or it used to be; It might have all changed now. (Pause..)

Subhuti: It's rather a discrepancy, isn't it?

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S: No. What I am thinking of is the principle of indeterminacy. But for all, as it were, practical purposes you accept the law of causation, don't you?

Subhuti: One more from Sagramati, concerned with dhyana.

Sagramati: In the first seven positive nidanas, they can also be seen as ...

S: Can I just interrupt for just a minute. Also I can check up what Aristotle has to say on causation here.

Sagramati; The first seven positive nidanas can also be seen as levels of dhyanic experience. Dhyanic experience has also been referred to as weighty karma. However, two nights ago, I gave the impression of dhyana as a sort of mood, even something quite passive. So, are they two categories of dhyanic experience, one with a spiritual edge to it with a basis in dukkha and siddha, and one which is sort of merely aesthetic.

S: Can you go through that again, clause by clause?

Sagramati: So, there is a correlation between the first seven positive nidanas and the four dhyanas.

S: and the four dhyanas? No, I would say not. The last of that first series is samadhi. So I would have taken it that is where full dhyana begins. I think that is how I have explained it in the Three Jewels.

Sagramati: The seven nidanas being equivalent to the first dhyana?

S: No, not equivalent simply to the first dhyana but equivalent in fact to all four dhyana~or even to all eight dhyanas but you would not necessarily develop all of them before passing on to the next step. You might only develop one of them. But, as far as I can see, all the factors of dhyana do not come into operation until that particular nidana is reached. Some of them do, obviously because there is an actual buildup and priti for instance is a dhyanic factor. But the presence of priti simply does not mean that there is a dhyanic experience because it is only one of the dhyana factors. You might for instance lose your concentration while having a priti experience.

Subhuti : I thought the description of nidana was a practical working out of the subjective experience of dhyana.

S: In a sense, yes. But the first few nidanas would represent the approach to dhyana. Otherwise, what you are almost saying is you are in the dhyanas right from the beginning but you are not.

Sagaramati:.; and from joy (?)

S: Yes. That is not to say that in your own practice, in your own experience you might have a very rapid progression through those nidanas and reach full samadhi within a matter of minutes. But nonetheless you would have made that ascent as it were through those nidanas.

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Sagaramati: And specifically, in the way we describe "priti", the stages of priti seem like stages of integration, the last level of priti is almost, is quite a high level of integration.

S: Yes. But also one must remember the point of departure with regard to the succeeding nidana can be a lower or a higher level of the preceding one. That also needs to be taken into account. You don't have to fully develop the preceding before having any experience of the succeeding one. You have to fully develop the preceding one before having a full experience of the succeeding one. But you could have a very weak priti experience and on the basis of the weak priti experience, you have a weak passadhi experience; and on the basis of a weak passadhi, a weak samadhi experience. Or vice versa. On the basis of a strong experience of priti, a really strong passadhi, and then an even stronger experience of samadhi. (Pause.) So you can have a very sort of light run up to a quite weak samadhi experience.

Ratnaprabha I think this correlation may come from the lecture you gave on the spiral path, which is in the mitrata omnibus. At least the note I have got here do have a correlation with the dhyanas. Although I am not certain whether that came from our study of that session or actually from what you said.

S: What have you got in your note?

Ratnaprabha~ Well, there is a correlation that I have down here between priti and passadhi and the first two dhyanas; and passadhi and the sukkha, with the third dhyana; and s.a'madhi, for the fourth ~ana.

Yes, but you see, as nidanas, those qualities exist as it were in isolation. Whilst in the case of the dhyanas, a number of them exist as it were together. So, though the experience of isolated priti is on the way to dhyana, and though it is a constituent of dhyana, the experience of priti by itself so to speak does not constitute a dhyana experience.

Sagramati : So, listening to music and feeling a rippling sensation, that is priti?

S: It can be, yes. And also what you must not forget, the experience must be skilful. You can have I think a non-skilful priti.

In what sense, Bhante?

S: Well, a sort of thrill of ecstasy, or joy connected with a

basic experience; for example sexuality, which is a very coarse kind. That kind of priti does not become a dhyana constituent.

Subhuti : We've got some more questions on priti. There is one from

_____ This is related, Bhante, to what you just said. The question is - We had a discussion on the nature of tension release; the question arising was, is the energy released that one might experience say

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in the course of communication exercises, of the same quality psychologically as that experienced on the spiral path, the latter being the former, greatly magnified?

S: I think it's quite difficult to generalise because there are so many people doing communication exercises and having all sorts of experiences. One would imagine that, in most cases, the tension release or the priti would be relatively coarse. But I don't want to exclude the possibility of someone, during communication exercises, having in fact a very refined experience of priti but I think that is possible, within that context. Because if the people who were doing the communication exercises were of a more refined nature - if they were meditating regularly and so on - it could be that they have a quite refined experience of ecstasy while doing the communication exercises. So I certainly would not rule that out, in fact I am sure it is possible.

Padrnavaajra: Can I just pick up a point which arose earlier. You mentioned priti for example as being one factor which can lead to dhyana. I was wondering about the spiral path generally. Are they if you like essential factors which are selected from out of a number of factors?

S: Yes I think one must not think too literally that there is just that one thing there;

there are other associated mental faculties as explained in the Abhidharma. For instance, in the case of the jhanas themselves, one must not think - as some Theravada Writers give the impression, or I might have even given you this impression myself - when one speaks of the first dhyana beings as consisting of five different factors, only those factors are present. You must not forget that a dhyana is a skilful mental state, and there are eight universal factors, I think it's eight, which are present in all skilful mental states including dhyanic ones. So, it's rather as though the most prominent features are singled out for special mention or maybe I should say the 'distinctive' ones. But that does not mean that other mental factors are excluded; or that there are not other mental factors other than those specifically mentioned.

Sagaramati: Does that mean, if Sradhdha is always there, then dhyanic experience has always got some religious element?

S: Well more than that. And I think we went into this in the Mind in Buddhist Psychology seminar - that all skilful mental states have an overall sort of spiritual orientation. One might even say - but this must not be taken too literally - transcendental orientation because one remembers what was the definition of faith or rather that there were three different kinds of faith. There was lucid faith, there was trusting faith and there was the (longing?) faith. So it is as though in every skilful mental state - and a dhyana is a very skilful mental state - there is a sort of incipient urge towards the transcendental. In much the same way, one might say, that within the lower evolution there is present the incipient higher evolution, the spiral as it were. I think that is quite an interesting and quite important point because the Abhidharma tradition is quite clear and quite unambiguous here, that in every positive mental state, in every 'kusala-citta', every kusala citta complex that is to say, the element of sradhdha is present, which has tremendous implications one might say.

Sagaramati; Another part of the question never really answered
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was; there is a distinct difference between that sort of dhyanic experience and what we might call an aesthetic experience which seems to be devoid of that religious element.

S: Well, does the aesthetic experience contain the mental factor of faith?. In a sense, that's the crucial question. You might say: well, there are aesthetic experiences that do; there are aesthetic experiences that don't, depending on such and such factors or for such and such reasons. You might find, in listening to Bach's mass in B minor, you understood it; you knew what it's all about. In other words, there was an element of faith even in the Buddhist sense. But perhaps in listening to something else, that element of sradhdha would not be present. I think that is the crucial factor that in the case of some aesthetic experience, faith in the Buddhist sense is present. To that extent, it approximates to a dhyana experience. But in other kinds of aesthetic experience, that element of faith is simply not present; we can't even think of it in that connection perhaps.

_____ And then, it is not a dhyana experience?

S: Then it would not be of a dhyanic nature because it would not be skilful and it cannot be

dhyanic and not skilful. It's the 'sradha' that determines whether it is - or one of the factors that determines whether it is skilful. And a dhyana must be skilful; you can't have an unskilful dhyana; yes in a sense you can have an unskilful concentration but that is not a dhyana in the full sense of the term.

Sa ramati: Would not that experience a skilful~r~ in the dhyanic experience, would not it have some effect on you? You were talking the other night if you could experience~ these and it does ~0t have much effect on your ethical mind a~t~a1b ~hert~

S: Ah, I was talking of music as it were devoid of content, devoid of meaning. But one could be more precise and say as also devoid of what we call the element of faith.

Sagramat~: How about Devadatta; he did get into these higher dhyanic experiences, ~ surely, he must have ~experience of these powerful skilful mental states...

S: But temporarily. We know from our own experience that you can be in a very friendly, kindly mood and then, two minutes later you can be in a real rage, forgetting all about your former friendly feelings. So, it is the same in the case of a dhyana; you can actually get right away from it into a quite demonic sort of state. So that is what it seems happened to Devadatta. (Pause.) But we know - putting it on a much lower level - one of the things you so often hear from people who say have not been on retreats for a long time and then they go on a retreat: ~I'd forgotten how good it was.~ They are so alienated, even from the memory of the previous experience, ~t it was so good at the time and might have included many~ meditations. But they don't even remember; not to speak of being able to really feel in recollection, they don't even remember that it was so good. I mean many a time people have said to me or written it to me. You can get so far away from your previous skilful experience. That's one of the reasons why you need to take advantage of such opportunity to develop at least a glimmering of insight which will remain as it were constant..

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Padmavajra:, In our teaching of the spiral path, do you think it's important that we fill out each stage in terms of, sort of ... the ethical implication of each stage. I noticed in your lecture you said 'sukha' was bliss but it also meant love; I was wondering about that. ~hat there, are essential factors, but we need to fill them out. S: I think it would not be a bad thing if you were constantly to remind people - or constantly and as regularly as seemed appropriate - that these higher more skilful states, dhyanic states especially, could only be sustained on a strongly ethical basis. I mean otherwise people could think of them as more like aesthetic-experiences which they are sort of given without much if anything in the way of ethical preparation on their own part. (Pause.) I think it's not at all a bad thing to remind people of the general ethical basis of the spiritual life and even of the human state itself.

This~reminds of something I was going to say; this seems a suitable opportunity to say it. In Tuscany we studied on one occasion that chapter in the Dhammapada - I think it's the Buddhavagga - where the Buddha says 'hard to attain is the human state or human

birth.' But this is traditionally understood as a human rebirth. But it occurred to me just listening to it read to me the other day that it could just as well be looked at in another way; that is within this life itself, it's hard to attain and sustain a genuinely human state. We're not born fully, really and effectively human; it's something that we have to attain. So it's not just a question of 'well, it's very difficult to be born as a human being, you are much more likely to be born as a dog or a cow or a sheep or a monkey, it's not that. But, yes,- it is that too but perhaps even more relevant- it is that even though we've got the- human form, even though we are humanoid, it's really 'quite difficult to achieve' the human state, we must not take for granted that--we already have achieved it or that we've achieved it just by virtue of being born technically a member of the species' homo sapiens. Anyway...,

Subhuti : The next question is from me; it has been partly answered but... Apart from faith- the six- sense- bases are described entirely in emotional terms in the lecture. The- cognitive- element, -- is not included. There is surely some change in perspective at these levels. Why is this not mentioned?

S: I suppose--here I offer a suggestion straight off the top of my head - I suppose it's all bound up with this question of dukkha, of seeing dukkha as dukkha. Because dukkha is not merely the experience of dukkha. It's also getting the experience of dukkha or the possible experience of dukkha into a certain perspective. I think this is 'probably where the element of understanding comes in. Do you see what I mean? It is not... for instance you have the experience of dukkha so it's not that because you feel dukkha, because you experience suffering, immediately faith arises. No. You have to reflect upon that suffering; why am I suffering. For instance, you may be suffering because you are parting from someone near and dear to you. You reflect on that and you think well what is the cause of that suffering, it's because of my attachment to this near and dear person. But then, should I really be '(attached, ?) that person is impermanent; I am impermanent too. If I, as an impermanent being become over-attached to other impermanent being, well of course suffering is likely to arise. So I think it is at this level in connection with that first nidana, that the element

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of reflection and understanding comes in. And then out of that as it were, the emotional counterpart of that understanding, faith in some vaguely perceived, higher reality emerges. This is all I can think of at the moment. But clearly it is a reflecting, geared to actual experience; it's not purely theoretical. It grows out of that actual existential situation and illumines it.

Sagramati: In Mind and Buddhist Psychology, he mentions you see the alliance of the Three Jewels.

S: Yes, this is the lucid faith, this is the lucid faith. And the trust that you have, is in, (virtually?) the law of karma, and action and reaction; karma+vipaka. So, again there is an element of understanding pre-supposed there.

P va : You mentioned faith as - a total response as well. So presumably that implies a cognit~e

S: Yes, aSagaramati mentioned ~-the three-fold division of faith. That seems to presuppose a certain degree of understanding too. Perhaps that could be as- it were further-gone into on some occasion in some lecture, perhaps the cognitive element in connection with that particular sequence of nidanas in dependence cApon suffering, faith arises. It is not surely~ the simple experience of suffering. In fact, you need not actually experience suffering at-all personally for faith to arise. Because you may simply reflect on life in general and see its potentiality for suffering without really having experienced any great degree of suffering yourself and, faith can still arise. (Pause.)

So the nidanas above faith can augment faith by reflection as well.

S: Yes because as in dependence upon A, B arises, one must not Tmagine that when B arises, A has been left behind; A is taken up into and incorporated into B. It's like the progress of a snowball, as it rolls over the ground; it grows bigger and bigger, it incor- porates more and more factors, more and more highly integrated. (Pause. So, when you reach the level of dhy~a you haven't just got something called 'concentration', you've got a whole array of positive mental factors held in balance, fully or at least very well integrated. (Pause

~and blissful -Chakkhupalaj The language describing the early stages, the early -nidanas int~e pat~ of the higher evolution; for example: joy, delight, rapture, ecstacy, thrilling, electrifying* is strongly emotional and in the case of 'priti'e~tremely physical. Sch however does nQt seem to be the o~ -£&equent e~p~~~~~C~~m~ny aspirants within the Movement. Are we, as members of the Movement, largely still beneath this stage or might you consider there to be other factors either preventing or circumventing or diluting such intenSe psycho-physical experiences?

S: I think it's very difficult to bear intense psycho-physical experiences or even just intense~emotional -experiences for very long at a time. I think it's very difficult to sustain that sort of higher level of intense emotionality for want of a better term. So I don't think it is to be understood~when you are following the that

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spiral path you feel all the time in that intensely blissful, escta- tic sort of state. I don't think your system could stand it for too long. But on those occasions when especially you meditate, yes you do have that sort of experience; I think you should normally have that sottdfexperience at least for a little while before you get into a dhyana-like state if you are leading a skilful and purpo- seful life under relatively good conditions. But having said that, I think ideally one should be in a sort of mildly blissful state or at least a mildly emotionally

positive state all the time, though short of actual ecstasy. ~ts just when conditions become just a little bit better, a little bit mor~~conducive,~a little bit more favourable and especially when you are able to meditate, then every- thing should just come together and you should feel quite blissful and even ecstatic before you merge into a deeper, more sort of concentrated kind of experience. I think actually broadly speaking the Movement as a whole stands up very well in this respect. I was noticing just leafing through my recent Sh abddha that when Vidyavati showed her slides of the Movement to people, they were struck by how positive the women in particular - the women in particular (?) were mentioned because she took especially slides of the women - everybody was struck how positive and beaming all the women were whether on retreat or in communities or even actually working in co-ops. This seemed to impress people very, very much. So, clearly, it does seem that on the whole people in the FWBO attain, as one might expect them to attain, a sort of higher general level of overall positivity. I think that one does notice this when one comes back into a centre or a community from being outside in the world. I certainly notice it whenever I go down to London and I am staying Sukha~vati and I have just spent the afternoon in London, or working in London, you come back into the community or just into a little Buddhist village. The difference is so great in terms of people's emotional positivity and general aliveness, especially if you come back from the tube. Sometimes it's quite sad to see people on the tube.

Saddhaloka We would still seem to be a bit ~ay from this cpndition which you just mentioned there, and when most of us go to sit and medi tate, having experienceS like this regularly.

S: I think in the case of quite a lot of people there is still quite a bit of unfinished business so to speak coming up from the depths- not from very far down in the depth, it's all relatively superficial stuff! Left over from their childhood, and () what their parents did to them or their brothers or sisters did to them or more recently what their wives or husbands and girlfriends, all~the rest have -° done to them, even what their children haVe done to them, even their dog had done to them, even their bosses had done to them! tlaughter) or even ~cas;ionally what an order member had done to them more recently lun~ortunately. There is that sort of unfinished business very often which does hold people back and which needs to be cleared up.

Saddhaloka : Generally you feel happy about the way things are moving int~at w~y in~the Movement? S: Yes, though of course they could move more rapidly obviously, I'll be happier -still then!

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~arabha: Did you mean to imply there is usually some kind of a lingering resentment which

is stopping one from setting ...

S: Not just resentment, it's a bit more complex than that. But supposing the conditions are favourable. In your unconscious-mind, you are in quite a positive state, you've got the opportunity to meditate, well what is holding you back? There is of course the even deeper gravitational pull, meanwhile before that as it were comes into operation, there is his unfinished business in quite a few cases holding people back, very often left over from their childhood. I do know because there are quite a few people in the order who quite consciously, are struggling to come to terms with experiences in childhood and experiences with their parents as they were growing up. There is a lot of trauma as it were to be worked through. (Pause.) It could be fear, it could be feeling of isolation; things of that sort too; feelings of personal worthlessness, feelings of inferiority, feelings of not being wanted. As well as anger & hatred you could have a number of these all mixed up together in quite a tangled mass forming almost a sort of thick lump. But on the whole - we must not dwell too much on the negative side - on the whole, yes I think quite definitely that the level of average positivity or level of overall positivity within the FWBO is noticeably above the average that one finds outside. Obviously that should not give rise to any feeling of complacency because we can do better and also we must not look down upon people on lower levels of positivity but feel sorry for them and realise that we've just got to make a greater effort to spread the Dharma so that it becomes available to more and more people. It's just a shame that they have not gotten on to it yet and may be it's partly our fault because we haven't conveyed the Dharma in such a way that is able to reach them. After all - I mentioned the case of the LBC because I visited it a little while ago, I mentioned London - if you think that Bethnal tube station is only a few hundred yards away and in the course of a year how many millions of people pass up and down there? No need to go around looking for people'. _____ It's only the minority that will take to it.

S: But even admitting only a minority will take to it - and we don't know that for certain even - well I am sure that the minority could become very much bigger than it is at the moment. Presently it's a tiny, even a microscopic minority. I think it could become very much bigger. I mean I give the example of India. When I was first in India I would not have believed had anyone told me that when you leave India in 20 years time, there is going to be four million Buddhists in India. I could not have believed it because there were just a few hundred, or at most a few thousands scattered around in those days. If someone told me four million Buddhists after just a few years, I would have found it very difficult to believe even in my most wildly optimistic moments. I know that there are not perfect Buddhists but quite a lot of them are doing pretty well and at least they feel that they are Buddhists and they willing to be taught usually, that's the great thing. So if you could see 4 million Buddhists appearing almost over night in India, especially in Maharashtra providing a basis of (entry?) for quite a vigorous FWBO some years later, well what might we not achieve within even a few years in London or other places in the West.

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I am quite impressed how rapidly things have started moving in Germany with just two order members based there, in a big country like that with its own very strong culture and its high standard of living and all the rest of it, but they seem to have got a good foothold already; I think we are doing really quite well. O.K. (Pause.)

Subhuti : You speak of the second dhyana as the infusion of the super conscious into the ordinary mind; this implies that the first dhyana is the ordinary mind. The first dhyana is in the rupa loka. Can it really be considered to be the ordinary mind?

S: In a way it's splitting hairs but yes one needs to split hairs because hair has to be split. (Laughter.) It is not the ordinary mind in quite the ordinary sense obviously. Our first dhyana mind. . We are not in any position to speak of a first dhyana mind as an ordinary mind, put it that way, no. So that requires, yes, some qualifications certainly.

Subhuti: There is also a little bit of sorting out a bit further on. You also speak of the first dhyana as being the union of conscious and unconscious minds. In what sense are you speaking here of the unconscious?

S: I think perhaps I should be more accurate and say 'sub-conscious' accepting Jung's distinction between unconscious and sub-conscious. I believe Freud spoke only of the sub-conscious and that Jung introduced that distinction; that the sub-conscious is personal to you and it represents content that had been actually repressed by you in this life itself. So clearly they are contents that really belong to a consciousness but which have been repressed. So for it to be possible for you to enter the first dhyana, they have to be reclaimed. In fact, that process is an integral part of the achievement of the first dhyana. So one can speak of the first dhyana in those terms. (Pause.) Of course it also means that some of those contents will be admitted into consciousness only as it were to be dismissed as unskillful but not thereupon thrust back into the subconscious but dissolved, dissipated, and the energy that was locked up in them absorbed into the conscious mind and conscious attitude, into one's life in general.

Sagramati : This is happening in the first dhyana?

S: Yes, in relation to the first dhyana.

Sagramati : Because you've also mentioned in the distinction between horizontal and vertical integration horizontal integration would be the coming together of what you're conscious of and also what you've repressed in your subconscious. So, when you come into contact with the subconscious, it would not actually be vertical integration which is from the karma loka to the rupa loka, it's just filling out the horizontal level?

S: Yes in a way, it is because one could say the sub conscious belongs to - for the sake of this nomenclature - the horizontal level; the horizontal band rather than horizontal

line.

Subhuti : Kulamitra has a question on dispassion.

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Kulamitra: Yes. You say that the stage of dispassion is characterized by imperturbability and that this imperturbability was the state of the Buddha before his enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. Does this mean that the Buddha had passed the point of no return sometime before his enlightenment?

S: Well, it depends what you mean by enlightenment, clearly. One - because I've spoken of the Buddha's enlightenment experiences being as it were spread over perhaps a number of weeks so one should not think of it as something attained in one split second. So, if one regards the point of no return as a stage on the path to enlightenment, well presumably the Buddha had achieved that point, had achieved that stage before attaining full enlightenment and in as much as stream entry is irreversible, one can perhaps equate that with imperturbability in the strict sense. Because to be imperturbable, unshakable, you can't be liable to any descent so to speak.

Sagaramati: But would not the Buddha have been a stream entrant - He was born? Would not that account for the fact that it took Him six years to go from...

S: Within the Pali records, there is no reason for us to think that. The Buddha speaks of Himself as having formerly been subjected to the klesas and so on, does not He?

Sagaramati : That would be... it's like a human being who has got a potentiality for an adult mind. While you are children, you still have to go through all the same experiences as any other child. So even the Buddha was attached to his mother etc etc, I think there seems to be some impetus there

S: The implications of that way of looking at things were worked out by the Mahayana - which of course is a subject in itself, quite a vast one. But I think there is nothing in the Pali Canon to require us to believe that the Buddha in His early life was not a potogena (?), that is to say an Aryan, not even a stream entrant. To the best of my knowledge, there is nothing that obliges us to believe that.

: Was not the Buddha predicted to enlightenment by his contact with previous Buddhas? Is not that in the Pali Canon?

S: Yes but, if one goes into the full bodhisattva doctrine it may or may not be developed by the Theravad to the full (?), the bodhisattva refrains from following the path of arahantship, avoids becoming a stream entrant because he does not want to gain arahantship he wants to gain full enlightenment. So at least at one stage of Buddhist development or Buddhist thought, the path of arahantship was not seen as a stage on the path to Buddhahood but an alternative path therefore to be avoided by the bodhisattva. So the bodhisattva goes through his various births avoiding that path and therefore not becoming a stream entrant so that when he is born in his last birth, he does not start off as a stream entrant but as something else, some other kind of being.

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S. Bodhisattva he can't be a stream entrant. This is of course being very strictly doctrinal as it were because I don't personally accept that hard and fast distinction between the two paths. There is no as it were incidental information contained in the Pali Canon that would lead one to think that the Buddha had attained the transcendental path before his actual attainment of enlightenment, or even before that particular period he inaudible) attained full enlightenment but he seems to have started as a wanderer, a ~~~th~~~~fl~~ an anarya.

Sagaramati; When I think about it I think well there must have been some conditions in the Buddha say when he saw the four sights etc that you don't find in ordinary people. Ordinary people can see the same truth but they certainly couldn't attain to that full enlightenment in six years. So what were the factors that made such a radical difference?

S: Well if one goes as it were by appearances then there was no apparent sort of transcendental element in the future Buddha's life. He was to all intents and purposes and ordinary person. One can only assume as of course Buddhism eventually did assume and work out the implications of the position that there was something in his previous lives which was not there in the case of other people and eventually it was believed a whole series of lives as a Bodhisattva. But one doesn't actually know.

Sagaramati; Even this transcendental element. Surely it wouldn't become apparent in somebody's life until they reach a certain degree of maturity. It wouldn't be obvious

S: There's also the point... ~ou're trying almost to set up a deterministic chain of cause~and effect. One also mustn't forget that, to use as it were popular parlance, there is such a thing as free will and that it's as it were unfathomable in the sense that any human being of his own free will can at any moment originate any completely new series of events. Otherwise if you are looking for a cause of that well it becomes almost determinism, almost sort of predestination to enlightenment.

Sagaramati; Buddhism teaches causality, that things don't happen without a cause. S: But in dependence upon What you're suggesting amounts to (Satkaryavada) that the effect is completely contained in the cause and is a sort of transformation of it.

Padmavaira; So it's not justy~u are a product of your conditions but at any time you could

take a stand and actually change' those conditions.

S If asked why you should do that it suggests there is a cause for your doing it rather than a condition for your doing it. It is as though you feel the condition isn't sufficient to explain, there must be a cause to explain.

_____ So the condition would be your basic human potential the circumstances and
so~on S: . . . and the potential it's Suhvata itself which makes all things possible.
It's an even more complex question than that. It does introduce the so called question of free
will. Otherwise you've got a sort of chain of causes and effects which is virtually sort of
deterministic

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Sagaramati; How does the Buddhist get out of this question of free will?

S: Well the question of free will is not the question that has ever to the best of my knowledge
arisen within the context of Indian thought.. It would be quite an interesting point of enquiry
just to investigate why it is such a peculiarly western and christian problem. I personally
think it's an artificial problem. It is a question that people in the west, especially christians
, have taken very seriously indeed. What is meant by saying that you are free to do
something or are not free to do something.

_____ Just a very simple question of basic origination When you talked
about imperturbability went- you mentioning the attack of Mara and his hordes on the Buddha?

S: I really can't remember. I might have but I can't remember for sure.

Susiddhi; Does the Bodhisattva have to avoid stream entry because according to strict
doctrine he would then have a limited number of lifetimes?

S: No as a Bodhisattva his aim is the supreme enlightenment of a Buddha - Samyak
Sambodhi - so he wishes to avoid Arhantship which in this context is regarded as a lower, as
an inferior goal, So if he were to gain Arhantship he would have failed in his mission and
once you've gained stream entry you cannot then according to this particular tradition do
anything else other than gain Arhantship or Nirvana for yourself alone. It's a framework with
which I do not personally agree but that is to answer the question within that framework.

Susiddhi; That's why you say strictly doctrinal. S: Yes Subhuti; There is one more question
which is not actually related to this particular lecture but the overall framework.

Ratnaprabha; In very brief terms the question is is there a lower devolution. In other words

you've talked in terms of the lower evolution and you've also talked of course in terms, the traditional terms of the wheel of life as being a cyclic process. The lower evolution seems to imply that there's a constant sort of upward movement within the wheel of life. Is it counteracted by a sort of lower devolution which sort of turns things back the other way?

S: To the best of my knowledge there is no - in Buddhism - no irreversible devolution. There is irreversible evolution from stream entry onwards but not irreversible devolution. Though that is to say there's a process of falling so far down that you cannot do anything else except fall after that. To the best of my knowledge there is no such teaching in Buddhism. But the Mahayana at least does envisage some people as having fallen so far that they cannot sort of retrace their steps without the help of others especially: without the help of Bodhisattvas, but if the Bodhisattvas do offer them their help they are able to

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avail themselves of it and retrace their steps however far they might have fallen.

Ratnaprabha; My question wasn't so much as to whether there is a lower devolution that allows you just to keep on going down and down but it's how to square the idea of the lower evolution which seems to imply within the collective process a continual upward movement - how to square that with the wheel of life.

S: I did touch on this at the very beginning when I spoke of it being possibly some sort of (aboriginal) split as it were, a sort of super cosmic big bang between spirit and matter, and one influencing the other even mutually consuming each other and as a result of the effect so to speak of the spirit on matter you get (evolution) and as a result of the influence of matter on spirit you get (involution) and the two meet so to speak in the middle. I did sort of suggest that sort of picture. Do you see what I mean? Though it's sort of mythic one might say. But I think there are reasons for looking at Buddhist thought in some such terms. So in that case there is corresponding to the whole process of evolution a process of involution. You could say that the process of evolution under the influence of spirit is an evolution of material form eventually culminating in homosapiens and the involution of spirit under the influence of matter is that sort of sinking down to ever lower and lower levels which is described in the Agan- (?) Sutta and becoming there mixed with organic forms. Of course it's not that the influence of spirit just starts operating at a certain point - it's operating all the time. So in a sense spirit is present in matter all the time. Do you see what I mean? Of course the language is metaphorical, spatial language but you can see what I'm getting at. So therefore one has to recognise within the evolutionary process a non material element of some kind in it or affecting it or permeating it, whatever the language that you may choose to use.

So that's it?. We've covered a lot more ground tonight then.

END OF SESSION

NEXT SESSION

Subhuti; We've had some difficulty in our group in fitting together the notions of lower and

higher evolution, of cosmic evolution and involution and of rebirth.

S: This doesn't really arise out of the lecture so much.

Subhuti; Not directly. It was related to what we were talking about last night, trying to fit the whole structure of the talks together. For instance when spirit and matter separate at the end of a world cycle according to the (Agama) sutta spirit rises to the brahma lokas yet the brahmalokas are correlated with the dhyanas which are entered at samadhi, the seventh stage of the spiral. This suggests that at the end of the world cycle without effort on the individuals part he's precipitated up the lower spiral to samadhi. There must be two different ways of being in the brahmalokas. Can you please disentangle us.

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S: First of all it's not at all clear what the brahmalokas actually stand for. I've got certain theories of my own in this respect but anyway let's just for the moment discuss the whole question within Buddhism, within the framework of Buddhism as generally accepted. It does seem to be the actual teaching of the Theravada, of the Hinayana following that, the Mahayana and Buddhism generally that at the end of the world period the whole cosmos is withdrawn into a more refined state, and that those beings so to speak who have not attained emancipation, who've not realised nirvana, find themselves in a brahmaloka. Some sources say in the (Abhasaradevaloka) there is some difference of opinion here but nonetheless they find themselves in as it were the sole remaining world or sphere which is a very high one if not the highest. So it would seem therefore, yes, that without any effort if one takes such statements literally they attain that sphere. That seems to be the way in which it is understood in Buddhist tradition. That doesn't seem very satisfactory so in what sense are they in that state. One can't really say that they're in it as it were unconsciously or passively or without realising it because that would be a sort of contradiction in terms because how could you be in a sort of dhyana like state in a sort of unconscious way. I can only say that the tradition as I've encountered it so far is that - and it clearly isn't very satisfactory - but I haven't yet got around to clearing up the mystery as it were. But I have been giving quite a bit of thought to what is meant by the brahmalokas and possibly it may have something to do with that or it may be one subject ~ill throw some light on the othe~~ut at present I'm unable to resolve the difficulty though traditionally in this respect as it has come down to us it does seem quite clear what tradition has to say. It does seem to involve some unexplained almost contra- diction.

Sagaramati; Didn't you say that you thought that this cycle is only in one ~~locosm(?) and that beings who didn't have the positive karma to be born in the spirit level as it were would be reborn in another universal system.

S: Well that is of course a possibility but tradition doesn't actually say that. It does in a way seem an easy way out, but that is a possibility that can be investigated. One might even find references~~jn Sutras to that effect. I can't remember coming across any such but it's not impossible. But the general view seems to be from a traditional view that beings as it were belong to a particular cosmos, that they don't as it were transmigrate from one cosmos to

another So that if the beings within a particular cosmos have not attained enlightenment by the time that cosmos comes to an end or one phase comes to an end then they remain in that particular state, that brahmaloka or whatever. Mahayana sutras seem to admit in a general way the possibility of being reborn as it were across universes but how that ties up with the perhaps older view about the beings belonging to a particular cosmos I don't know or whether it has actually ever been tied up traditionally I can't say.

Sagaramati; Isn't there a devaloka realm which is quite high up. It's got something to do with the negation of consciousness?

S: There is a sphere said to be that of the unconsciou% gods, the

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Asangikadevata, but what is meant by Asanga, in what sense are they unconscious? I don't think it could be unconscious in the ordinary sense. But perhaps their subject~object consciousness is somewhat as it were attenuated. One might look at it in this way. Whether that really is the explanation is difficult to say. It's plausible but is it actually the real explanation?

Subhuti; We wanted to appe&~ to you to~sort ~li this out. It's quite difficult if people know a little bit about it and they start to probe.

S: It's still more difficult if you know just a little bit about it, even just a little bit more.

Subhuti; We found your diagram in this lecture somewhat confusing, in fact in a sense the whole sce~ somewhat confusing. For i~nstance you speak of the stage of morality as taking place within the area where there is only the gravitational force of the conditioned, i.e. no influence of the unconditioned and you speak of the state of meditation as encompassing the lower seven positive nidanas. This would mean that there is no faith in morality, in the stage of morality presumably. Why would one then start to act morally in that case? You speak of the stage of wisdom as involving only the gravitational pull of the unconditioned yet it begins surely at point'E' on your diagram which if you remember is where both forces still operate.

S: Go through that again clause by clause.

Subhuti; You speak of the stage of morality as taking place within the area where there is only the gravitational force of the Oconditioned, i.e. no influence of the unconditioned.

S: I must say I don't find it easy to think back into what I Weant by that. I don't know whether it would help to listen to the tape or not, probably the tape doesn't elaborate on it very much, but just say that again.

Subhuti; (repeats the question)

S: I think - I don't have a definite recollection - but what I imagine I was getting at was that when you are trying to lead an ethical life that effort takes place within a sphere so to speak where as it were everything is against you, at least to begin with, that everything is pulling in the opposite direction. Not that the ethical life itself, not that sila itself represents a pull of the (unclear) but in your as it were natural state before any sort of ethical life begins you're entirely under the domination of the lower evolution, entirely under the domination of the gravitational pull of the conditioned and your ethical life consists in fighting against that and gradually replacing the unskilful by the skilful. So in that sense the ethical life takes place within that sphere. I don't have a definite recollection but I imagine that this is what I was getting at. *initially Subhuti; The second part is - you speak of the stage of meditation as encompassing the lower seven positive nidanas This would mean that there is no faith present in the stage of

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morality presumably. If that is the case why would one start to act morally?

S: Yes, I suppose this is the sort of difficulty which must arise when one makes distinctions and even draws charts at all because you cannot really sort of exclude anything from anything in the last analysis. ~ut even though one speaks of a sphere where the pull of the unconditioned is not operative at all though in a sense one is justifying speaking in those terms. From another point of view one might say from a higher point of view there is at least a minimal influence of the unconditioned because the unconditioned itself is as it were perfumed ~ well the conditioned is perfumed by the unconditioned just as the unconditioned is by the conditioned. But for certain practical purposes one can as it were ignore that metaphysical point. But certainly if one was giving a full and detailed exposition one would have to make that or incorporate that point in some way.

Subhuti; I don't feel that completely answers the problem because surely you set out on the path of morality on the basis of some response to the ideal.

S: But do you? In a sense - let's look at it from that point of view for a moment - perhaps you set out on the path of morality to begin with after conforming to the set of social requirements and from there you gradually move onto something of a more genuinely individual nature.

Ratnaprabha; You do distinguish in the lecture between natural and conventional morality and make it clear that it's natural morality that you're talking about.

S: Yes, but natural morality can still be taught. Do you see that I mean? Natural morality which you follow without understanding but nonetheless follow is not the same thing as conventional morality. Do you see what I mean?

Subhuti; Well that's the case that really explains better to my satisfaction w~ythere '5

no gravitational pull to the unconditioned at that stage. We're embarking on the moral life not because of an attraction to the unconditioned but just because

S: And that provides you at least with a basis. Assuming that you grow up within a healthy society, a healthy family, you're behaving in a sense in a skilful manner though without understanding why you're behaving so. So to that extent your ethical behaviour is quite limited but nonetheless you are on the right track so to speak. I don't know whether I had all these considerations in mind at the time that I gave the lecture. I couldn't swear to that.

Ratnaprabha; How would that tie in with the Noble Eightfold Path where the first limb if you see it consecutively, is perfect vision?

S: Here perfect vision would correspond to stream entry. When you look at the Eightfold Path that way round. That's the transcendental Eightfold Path. If you look at the Eightfold Path as the mundane Eightfold Path then of course it starts so

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to speak lower down because if you divide the Eightfold Path into three according to the transcendental path you've got wisdom, morality and meditation whereas in the case of the mundane Eightfold Path you've got morality meditation and wisdom. So in that case it starts from right action. There's no contradiction.

Subhuti; It's not usually presented in that way is it?

S: That's how I have presented it.

Padmavajra; So right view in the mundane Eightfold Path would be morality.

S: Perfect Vision in its fullness corresponds to insight and flow stream entry, corresponds to the Dhamm~caksu, the Dharma eye.

Ratnaguna; What about right view as opposed to perfect vision?

S: I have gone into this on one convention many many years ago You can spread them out like this. You have right view to begin with, pure intellectual understanding of things. On account of your right view you practice ethics which is mundane ethics. On the basis of those mundane ethics you practice meditation in the sense of the attainment of the mundane dhyanas. On the basis of that practice of the mundane dhyanas you then develop bhavanamayaprajna, that is to say transcendental wisdom or insight. Having developed that transcendental insight it finds expression in action which is not simply skilful but action which is akiriya and similarly in mental states - samadhi again not merely mundane but which are again akiriya. So you've got six stages. Stage one is mundane wisdom followed by mundane~morality followed by mundane meditation followed by transcendental wisdom followed by transcendental ethics followed by transcendental meditation. That is the total eightfold path.

Ratnaguna; Just now you said the mundane eightfold path starts at right action. That's why I asked that question.

Ratnaprabha; But presumably you could say that it starts with mundane right view, in other words

S: Yes you could say that.

Ratnaprabha; so we can look at the two eightfold paths,...

S: As usually expounded it's two mundane stages followed by one transcendental stage, that is to say sila, samdhi, prajna.

Subhuti; It's usually expounded, it starts with right action?

S: You've got two things. You've got a path divided into eight sections and a path divided into three. So you've got to work out a correspondance between the three and the eight and you can do that in two different ways in the sense of two different series. If you view the path as transcendental well it then begins with wisdom, i.e. transcendental wisdom. If you view it as mundane it starts with ethics, that is to say mundane ethics.

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Sagaramati; It would be the same with the Six Perfections. It's only on the basis of insight that you can perfect the previous five.

S: Just a minute! I left out one stage. On the basis of your Wundane dhyana you develop a mundane clear understanding and that clear mundane understanding becomes the basis of a transcendental insight. But we find both the mundane Eightfold Path and the transcendental Eightfold Path mentioned in the scriptures but when we get the Eightfold Path as usually enumerated is understood to be the mundane eightfold path in the sense that it is supposed to start with just an intellectual understanding but actually that is the transcendental eightfold path in a sense of the eightfold path starts with a transcendental experience or insight. So the whole Eightfold Path as usually expounded is just completely undervalued. It's debased almost. On the Order convention. I think when we were Abhirati I did have some quite lengthy discussions about this and at that time I drew up a 'threefold' chart in three parallel strips showing the interrelations between these different ways of looking at the eightfold path and the three siksas. Those charts we re around for some time and then they seemed to get lost.

Sagaramati; Isn't there something in the Survey?

S: Oh yes I've explained it in the Survey yes. I've shown the correlation between the eightfold path and three siksas in these two ways. It comes in chapter four where I discuss the

Bodhisattva Ideal.

Sagaramati; Going back to Subhuti's point isn't ethics as it were inherent in the very nature of becoming self conscious? It's not coming under the influence of something transcendental. It's something actually inherent in the nature of becoming self conscious. Like you've got the karma niyama which is below the dharma niyama so your consciousness begins to individualise and develop and it must develop in a sense with a feeling for ethical behaviour.

S: Well this is again something that we talked about quite a lot I think in Tuscany, the fact that when you become self conscious you are able to put yourself in the place of the other person as it were, you are able to imagine and that is in a way the beginning of ethical life.

Sagaramati; So you could do that without having shraddha?

S: I think probably is entirely a matter of definition. Because it's as though when you have say the consciousness of yourself you have self consciousness and then because you have self consciousness you can also think of or become aware of the other - the other person, the other being - and then by the exercise of reason and imagination you can conclude that in the same way that you have feelings - in the same way that you can be hurt so the other person must be hurt by say the same sort of behaviour that hurts you. You can't experience his hurt but you can infer it and act accordingly. The fact that you've become aware in that way means that you have to some extent transcended the absoluteness of the dichotomy between self and other. So in that way it would seem at least the beginnings

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of some sense of the transcendental enters in because if you could not enter into someone's experience in that sort of way it would mean that the difference between subject and (object) was absolutely absolute, but the mere fact that you can do that whether through reason or imagination or empathy means that that distinction though very very strong and powerful an experience is not in the last analysis absolute, and that you have some experience of the fact, however rudimentary, that it is not absolute and that is your experience of the transcendental.

Subhuti; You also identify the imagination and faith don't you. So presumably even to this rather limited extent the imagination with which you identify and enter into somebody else's world is a sort of prefiguration.

S: Yes in the sense of a transcendence of the subject object duality. Though perhaps you know going back to that chart and the trouble it gave you, perhaps faith could be represented as present even in the conditioned although that is the sphere of influence of the gravitational pull of the conditioned, as a mere dimension-less point. Do you see what I mean?

Ratnaprabha; A dimensionless point in a sphere coming under the influence of the

S: Yes because it was dimensionless it would mean that all that area is still occupied exclusively by the gravitational pull of the conditioned, since it's a point, albeit a dimensionless point, it means that in a way it doesn't contradict the pervasiveness of the pull of the conditioned within that area, nonetheless the pull of the unconditioned is present without being present.

Subhuti; Without labouring this, but insofar as we just talked of morality as involving a leap of imagination therefore an element of faith, does that not mean that then we've got faith in this, .. we've got some element of the unconditioned in this

S: In practice a point always does have dimensions. (Laughter)

Subhuti; I appreciate it can't all be tied down too much but it does

S: Yes what it really means is that those distinctions which I drew can't really be regarded as absolute but on the other hand you can't just say that they're not absolute, you have to work it out in detail a little bit more than that.

Subhuti; There was one other part of the question. Yes, you speak of the stage of wisdom as involving only the gravitational pull of the unconditioned yet it begins surely at point 'E' on your diagram where both forces are still operating.

S: I must be speaking here - I imagine, I can't remember - of Wisdoms it were wisdom in its fullness but clearly of course there are stages in the development of wisdom, - you don't come to wisdom in its fullness all at once. You probably just need a

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more complex diagram.

Subhuti; You do describe the stage of wisdom as beginning at stream entry.

S: Of course it begins at stream entry. You grow from there. But it must obviously be present from that point in some (way) or another. Perhaps we need some sort of overlappings, different colours overlapping, bars as it were with different areas. But I think the general picture is clear nonetheless. It needs some theoretical tidying up. I must say also that I haven't really occupied myself mentally with this sort of presentation for quite a few years. I find it a little difficult to think my way back into it.

Subhuti; I think actually the principles were clear but we were just looking at it from the point of view of an intelligent and perhaps a little literal minded mitra who could run rather foul of it all.

S: It does seem that literal mindedness is the source of 90% of the questions that one gets or

that occur to one. On the other hand you can't always get away by saying well you've got to take the spirit of it. If you do start explaining things in a certain way you've got to try to follow it right through and not just invoke this thing of taking the spirit of it as soon as difficulties start arising within that particular context. You can't really do that. You can't invoke sunyata too quickly,

that would be suspect. Again it does seem I need to go over all this. It does seem as though there's a big sort of task. Ideally I suppose re writing the whole thing and writing it up in book form giving a fuller account. But if I can't do that somebody else could some day or maybe different people work on different chapters. Anyway we'll see.

Abhaya; Padmavajra has a question on the cultural origins of the wheel of life.

Padmavajra; How did the cosmology of the wheel of life of Buddhism evolve? Did it just take over the pre-existent Indian cosmology or did it just see it in a new light. What was the cosmology of archaic Buddhism. How does the cosmology of Buddhism apply to us now?

S: Alright clause by clause then.

Padmavajra; How did the cosmology of Buddhism evolve?

S: I wonder what one means by evolve.

Padmavajra; Well I suppose that really leads into the second question. Did it just take over the pre-existent Indian cosmology?

S: I touched on this some evenings ago. There is a definite answer to that first clause which is no. Another point is that Buddhist cosmology in a broad sense, that is cosmology in the sense of theology of this particular or each particular cosmos, remained remarkably standard and uniform throughout the whole course of Buddhist history. That is to say you get the fundamental division of kamaloka, rupaloka, arupaloka and the

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transcendental beyond and you get each of these realms subdivided. The higher realms being inhabited by all sorts of gods, devas, brahmas, whose names are given. The levels are enumerated variously but often they speak of about thirty different kinds of beings lower and higher. So this list remains remarkably uniform. For instance you've got above the human realm the realm of the four gods, the realm of the yamadevas, the tushitadevas, the Tavatimsadevaloka where Indra is and above that the rupaloka realm and above those the arupaloka realm with their various gods inhabiting the various planes and subplanes. The enumeration is very very uniform. The interesting thing is it's not found in pre-Buddhist Hindu literature or pre-Buddhist Indian literature. Of course except for Indra and his heaven,

possibly Yama. But to the best of my knowledge there is no reference in for instance the Vedic literature to any of those higher realms and this is a quite interesting and quite important point. Even though it's stated that various brahmas of ancient times came to this and that dhyana and even spoke with brahma. In the surviving Hindu Vedic literature there's no record of these higher planes and their divinities by those particular names that are given in

Buddhist Literature at all. And I think this goes to show the discontinuity of Buddhism with specifically Indian tradition. It may point to some other part of the world, possibly to the Middle East or Iran but does not point to Vedic India. So that is a quite important point. I'm doing a little bit of sort of research on this point. Hopefully I'll have more to say about it later on. I don't think anybody has ever drawn attention to this.

Kuladeva; Maybe it's just a question of the material having been lost.

S: Well there's always that possibility to be considered. This is one of the reasons why the whole subject requires quite a bit of investigation. Higher realms are mentioned in Vedic literature, later Vedic literature, and of course in (Koranic) literature but the Buddhist names, the names which we have in Buddhism are just not found except in one or two quite late texts which have been influenced by Buddhism, but not in anything pre Buddhist. Not in the Vedas and the (Brahmanishads I don't say Upanishads because it would seem now that even the older Upanishads were not entirely pre Buddhist. Anyway that's to answer the first clause.

Padmavajra; I was wondering about the cosmology of archaic Buddhism distinguishing, in Tu5cany-be-we-n - - Archaic Buddhism, Hinayana, Mahayana etc and I was wondering about that early phase.

S: There is no difference as far as I'm aware between the archaic Buddhist cosmology and later say standard Hinayana cosmology as regards enumeration, names of deities and so on~I think there is a difference of evaluation and that concerns the Brahmas and the Brahmaloas but again that is some thing I am currently investigating so I won't say anything more about it now.

Padmavajra; And my last question was how does the cosmology of Buddhism apply to us now.

S: I think it continues to apply because what is Buddhist cosmology?

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It's got two sides, an objective and a subjective. From a subjective side Buddhist cosmology represents certain possibilities of human experience and those possibilities by whatsoever name are still open to us. So I think it's highly probably, in fact in as much as in recent years our conception of our possibilities have shrunk considerably traditionw~(- Buddhist cosmology is more important than ever. So I am quite interested in this whole

subject. I really hope I can continue some of my investigations and produce at least a lengthy paper which at least will give a few clues which other people could follow. ~ think it's a very important subject.

Padmavajra; Are you interested at all in any comparisons there might be between the Buddhist scheme and say the Elizabethan scheme, the Elizabethan world picture?

S: I suppose that would come in at some stage but I think initially one must be quite clear about the Buddhist scheme and its significance, its spiritual, including its psychological significance. After all the mediaeval scheme - I suppose you're referring to ~ Tilgarth, the Elizabethan picture is a sort of le~over from the me~iaeval world scheme, basically concerne~ with that or one might say the traditional christian world scheme. So the two could be related or one could try to relate them. e~t first one~u~t really elucidate the Buddhist scheme and grasp its importance and have some experience of that importance. It ties up with the imagination in the sense that some of these higher realms are realms to which we have access through the imagination in the higher sense, a more developed sense.

Abhaya; Sagaramati has a question on asuras.

Sagaramati; How do the asuras fit in in terms of the realms? They have some connection with the god realms - presumably the kamaloka gods so are they a form of kamaloka god? If so can kamaloka gods manifest predominantly unskilful mental states and yet be above the human realm. Isn't perhaps the god of the Old Testament in a sense an asura?

S: He was mara! Go through that clause by clause.

Sagaramati; How do the asuras fit in in terms of the realms?

S: There's always been some inconsistency in Buddhist texts. Thirst of all what is an asura though. The In~ian and Vedic asura corresponds to the Iranian (ahura). This is well known except that in persian mythology the ahuras are the goodies and the devas are the baddies hence our devil you see. Whereas in Indian mythology the asuras are the baddies and the devas are the goodies. Asura is sometimes explained as - probably not scientifically A-sura, the non god or the anti god because sura can mean god but probably that is not a scientifically correct system of ~tymology. Both Vedic legend, or vedic myth and Zoroastrian myth^{1/4} legend speak in terms of conflict between the devas and the asuras or ahuras. There are several passages in the Pali scriptures where the Buddha says that such and such person developed great psychic powers to the extent that he was able to perceive the battles between devas and

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asuras. There are several other such passages in the Pali Canon. So the idea of there being

a state of struggle between these two kinds of being was well established and clearly for asuras to be able to struggle with devas they must have something in common with them. They must be at least near enough to be able to reach them and fight with them, So in a sense they're a sort of deva, in a sense you could say. And there are also all these legends about them fighting for the possession of the Kalpa (~~&frsa) the wish fulfilling tree, but where do they come in the Buddhist scheme? Sometimes they would seem to come or sometimes they do come between the human beings and the gods, the kamaloka gods, so clearly they are regarded as gods but of a lower kind. Sometimes they are relegated to the position below human beings in between as far as I remember animals and pretas. you'll have to check this but certainly lower than human beings. Now you asked whether they are above human beings didn't you. The question of above of course one has to ask above in what respect and one explanation I have come across is that there are two principles of classification, one in terms of power and one in terms of happiness. If you classify in terms of power asuras are more powerful than human beings - they're practically as powerful as the gods, therefore they come in between the human beings and gods. If you think of it in terms of happiness they are in fact quite miserable because of their fighting and warring nature. They come below human beings, possibly below animals and only above hell beings and pretas. So this accounts for - these two principles of classification - account for the fact that they are enumerated in two different positions in different contexts. This is the only satisfactory explanation of this discrepancy that I have come across. Oh yes, I should also mention that Pali texts speak of a pancagati of five going~ of five spheres not of six. The asuras in this context are not enumerated or if they are enumerated must be considered as a sub division of the fifth gati, that is the devas. They are not enumerated separately. So some scholars believe that they were incorporated into the scheme later on. Of course one can see that there is a sort of Iranian connection though perhaps it isn't a connection between the India of the Buddha's day and the Persia of the Buddha's day but the idea of the conflict between the devas and the asuras goes way back to a time before the Eastward going and the Westward going streams of the Aryan people separated. It's part of their common inheritance of myth and legend. And the western stream which produced Zoroastrianism developed that conflict between the devas and the asuras into a whole dualistic philosophy.

Sagaramati; The Aryans END OF TAPE 7 ~ (?)
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HIGHER EVOLUTION OF MAN Tape Code:-HEM(M)/8/.

Saddhaloka: With regard to Islam, it would seem to meet the characteristics of a universal religion, as you define them, insofar as it has a single founder, is to some extent not tied to a particular people, or country, and the individual is free to join it, But It would appear to have little to do with the emergence of the self-conscious individual even from its beginnings. However, you do seem to classify it as a universal religion. Could you comment on this?

S: Yes, I think I did that mainly for two reasons: first of all because in Islam and in the Qu'ran itself in fact, there is the notion of moral responsibility, that one is responsible for one's own actions, that actions may be either good or bad and that one will be rewarded for the good actions and punished for the bad. So this certainly does imply, a measure of self consciousness and to that extent a measure of individuality. The other reason was the fact that Sufism is at least in a sense a part of Islam and Sufism is certainly concerned with, quite un-ambiguously, with the development of the individual. Opinions differ as to the extent to

which Sufism can be regarded as part of Islam, or even, to take an extreme view, genuinely Islamic. But there's no doubt that large numbers of Sufis did regard themselves as orthodox Muslims and did fully conform to the orthodox Muslim Law, the Sha'riah. I can remember at least one Sufi master who went and fought, quite deliberately went and fought in a holy war and in that way ended his life, as so to speak, from their point of view, a 'martyr'.

These were the two main reasons I think why I included Islam among the Universal religions. I think that one might say that without Sufism, Islam might be a rather doubtful case. Anyway, the subject of Islam is a vast one, perhaps one can't really, in this connection say anymore than that.

Ratnaprabha: You were then asked, to recommend some books on Sufism.

S: Yes, and I did produce one didn't I? Has anyone had a look at it? It is quite a good and well-written work, though rather on the scholarly side. I can't think of any really popular books on Sufism; but that could certainly do as a good start.

Sagramati: Isn't the Universality of Christianity and Islam, due more to the consequences of their monotheism, i.e., saying that their god is a god for all, and their desire to make this god a god for all rather than any concern for the individual?

122 S: Of course there is in Christianity the idea of the individual soul and of each individual soul being precious in the sight of God. I didn't mention this the other evening, but it's something that occurs to me just now. Another point that occurs to me which I think holds good of all the great monotheisms that -is to say:- Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, perhaps it's seen most dramatically in the Old Testament, but it's as though individuality develops by way of the interaction with God, (do you see the sort of thing I'm getting at?). The point is sometimes made by Jewish writers, this is I think more characteristic of Judaism than Christianity, but the individual, very often the individual prophet answers God back or calls upon God to justify himself; so it is as though there is an interaction between the individual and God. We would say of course that the interaction takes place entirely within the human mind; well, perhaps one shouldn't say human mind but within human experience or human consciousness. Nonetheless it does seem to be a means, whatever the ultimate explanation maybe, of sharpening the human consciousness, even, sharpening the sense of individuality. So I think one can't therefore rule out Monotheism or monotheistic belief as a means, even though perhaps an indirect one, to the development of the individual, to at least some extent. Talking of Judaism, if one comes down to the Hassidic mystics, there are some quite humorous stories about Holy men in relation to God, how they answer God back or how they caught him out; so in that sort of way the idea of God itself becomes quite seriously modified one might even say. It is as though a sort of dialogue is going on within, one can't say the individual himself, but within his total personality for want of a better term.

Ratnaprabha: There was a follow-up which Subhuti produced which was:-that given the rapid decline of Christianity into an ethnic religion, is it not misleading to refer to it as a universal religion?

S: (There was a question of that general sort, I think). I would say that if one looks at the gospels, if one looks at them carefully, one can see at least what I would call the outlines of a

universal religion, even though that outline was not filled in subsequently and was very quickly abandoned. If any form of Christianity (here it would be a heretical form), was faithful to that outline, it was the Maachianites followers of the great gnostic Christian teacher~Maachian who altogether repudiated the God of the Jews, Jehovah; repudiated the Old Testament and emphasised the non-violent teachings of Jesus and so on, concentrated upon those. The latter-day Cathars were probably very much in line with that kind of thought because they did use the gospels especially the gospel according to St. John and of course they had no truck whatever with the Old Testament, or the God of the Jews, Jehovah.

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S(ctd): So I think, if Christianity is to be regarded as a universal religion it is on the strength of those kind of teachings attributed to Jesus within the gospels, teachings that the church as a whole has made no attempt to act upon, but which have been, as it were, rediscovered from time to time, by the odd individual who has tried sometimes to act upon them and in that way sometimes come into conflict with the church.

In more recent times Tolstoy has given a very powerful expression to his conviction that the more radical teachings with regard to not resisting evil and non-violence in general, those teachings found in the gospels really constitute the essence of Christianity; and that all the later doctrinal developments represent an evasion of those basically quite simple teachings. Its ~interesting that Tolstoy's exposition along these sort of lines influenced Mahatma Gandhi - his ideas about non-violence.

Ratnaprabha: There was another follow-up, a related one where someone wondered whether even the original Christianity of the gospels can truly be said to be universalistic?

S: I think it's a question of selectivity. There's no doubt that the teachings of the gospels are more genuinely universal than those of the Old Testament, but none the less that there are sort of elements which are ethnic one might say, rather than universal. If one was to give an honest historical appraisal of Christianity, meaning the gospel of Christianity, one would have to take those elements into consideration. If one was trying just to make the best possible case for Christianity being a universal religion, one could concentrate on those universal elements which are admittedly there in considerable numbers. I think I did say myself some years ago that if I chose, I could say everything I wanted to say practically about the path of the higher evolution, quoting only from the gospels. Of course there would be certain things I would definitely not quote because they'd be quite against what I was trying to say or not in harmony with it. To give you a sort of illustration:-Tolstoy discusses the question of what is meant in the teaching of Jesus' by 'neighbour', why he spoke so much about one's neighbour, and according to Tolstoy he was trying to overcome the racial and ethnic exclusiveness of the Jews; that you treat everybody, regardless of race, as your neighbour in a way that the Jews did not; you should not regard anybody as hostile in the way that the Jews regarded, in the Old Testament, the non-Jewish tribes... So this would clearly be characteristic of a universal teaching, rather than a purely ethnic one - universal religion rather than an ethnic one.

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Ratnaprabha: And somebody asked whether Christ could be considered a 'new man'.

S: I think that the answer to that is that we can't be completely sure that he was a historical character~ I was going to say fully historical character but that might be ambiguous. We can't be sure that the picture of Christ contained in the gospels is not a composite picture containing possibly some historical elements, containing possibly reminiscences of somebody who actually did live combined with all sorts of material from other sources. It may be that, that composite figure is entirely mythical; it isn't really easy to see through all the clouds, as it were of different opinions of scholars from the last couple of hundred years.

T~nanda: You speak of large monasteries developing under royal patronage and in isolation from lay people, & the second or third century after Parinirvana. I wondered what effect the development and eventual predominance, the Mahayana, had, on this situation? It is generally understood that the Bodhisattva Ideal re-asserted the possibility of the spiritual development for lay people as well as monks, but to what extent is it likely that this actually happened in view of the strength of the tendency to isolationism? In other words, was the Indian Mahayana able to put into practice what it asserted in theory in this respect? -

3: We don't know much in the way of historical records but it would seem that it was not able. It's as though the Mahayana inherited the full apparatus of Hinayana monasticism and functioned more or less in that particular framework. It certainly asserted, the sutras assert, that all people are capable of producing the Bodhicitta and becoming Bodhisattvas regardless of whether they are monks or laymen; you have of course the very ambivalent example of Vimalakirti - he's certainly not a layman in the ordinary sense. Nonetheless, it does seem that, even in the case of the Mahayana in India that very great dichotomy between the monk and the householder was not overcome in practice despite the Bodhisattva Ideal, as far as we can see whatever records we do have. I think I did also mention when we discussed this that perhaps one of the factors in this situation was the fact that Indians, that is to say 'high caste' Indians, look down upon manual work and that if you were occupied with any sort of intellectual or spiritual activity it was considered right and proper that you should not work, so this tended of course to confine intellectual and spiritual pursuits to either well-to-do members of the aristocracy or to wealthy Brahmins, or to monks in their monasteries; so far as Buddhism was concerned it was usually monks in their monasteries. Work was not considered a part, work in the ordinary sense was not

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S(ctd): considered a part of the spiritual life. That sort of development in accordance with the spirit of Mahayana Buddhism seems to have taken place only when Buddhism reached China. Perhaps to a lesser extent when it reached Tibet, so in some ways, one could say that in China, the principles of Mahayana Buddhism were put more fully into operation, one might say; the freedom, to some extent, from Indian cultural prejudices, and to some extent perhaps the practical, down-to-earth nature of the Chinese themselves, enabled the Chinese Buddhists, even monks in their monasteries to apply the teachings of the Mahayana to a much greater extent, in certain ways, than had been in fact possible in India itself. You had the great

Cha'an principle of a day of no working - manual work, is a day of no eating; and that was unthinkable in India, that really was a revolutionary principle. In India the principle was: a day of no begging, was a day of no eating, ~ot a day of no working, was a day of no eating~ ~ day of no dana, was a day of no eating. You have a situation in India, in Theravada countries where strictly speaking a monk can't make a cup of tea for himself t In some ways there is a positive principle behind it but it can result in, if one is not careful, an unhealthy ~liation from work; and work I believe is a necessity to a human being, to a healthy adult human being. By work I of course don't necessarily mean in gainful employment, but certainly including a degree, for younger people especially of physical activity, physical exertion.

Ratnaprabha: Padmavajra asked a follow-up to that, wondering whether perhaps the Mahayana Sutras are a little too universalistic?

S: I suppose you can't be too universalistic, but you can be, as it were, one-sidedly universalistic, in the sense that: you can be so absorbed in your universal visions that you forget to actually try to put them into operation. I think that it happened in the case of the Indian Mahayana, less so in the case of Chinese~ Japanese and possibly Tibetan Mahayana. And, as I mentioned, you ~shouldn't be so absorbed in the contemplation of the Bodhisattva Ideal that you become annoyed if you're asked to do something- for somebody: 'Don't ask me to help with the washing-up, I'm reading the Mahayana Sutras

Ratnaprabha: And lastly, I had a question about the ex-untouchables in India, and their roots in Ethnic religion: the ex-untouchable converts to Buddhism, in India, are said to have strong anti-hindu feelings. Is this likely to ~ut them off from the advantages of having a positive contact with an ethnic religion?

3-: I think there certainly is that danger, because they have espoused, most of them, to the extent that they have espoused~t all, a rather rationalistic form of Buddhism. One can't even say that it is the Theravada; it is the Theravada as presented with an emphasis on its rational aspect or rationalistic aspect by Western scholars.

S(ctd): They've received this at second or third hand. And they are remarkably positive ~rationaly~ still, but I think that is, they carry that with them from their past. I think if that positivity is not fed, and in the case of people within the F.W.B.O. in India it is fed by such things as meditation, then they could lose contact with something of a more deeply and genuine ~ emotional nature. I'm sometimes quite horrified by the extreme rationalistic attitude of some of the more Western-educated Buddhists among the ex-untouchables. They don't like anything to do with myth or legend or the imagination; they just like.....there's one of our 'friends' in Pune who's notorious for believing that the greatest modern Buddhist was Bertrand Russell. He believes that that is Buddhism - what Bertrand Russell says is Buddhism - and that's what the Buddha taught. They seriously believe that and are quite upset when we have things like Pujas, they are genuinely upset - thinking it's a betrayal of the Buddha's teachings. But there are quite a few people associated with us, especially °?~ndian Order members- who do see the need for emotional nourishment; they do see the need for an emotional aspect to our spiritual life and an imaginative aspect, quite clearly. But they're still very wary of anything that resembles Hinduism. Some, as I think I've mentioned, have started developing a liking for Western Classical music, especially Beethoven; they can listen to that

and enjoy it without any fear of-- suddenly finding themselves under Hindu influence without realising it!

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Higher Evolution.

Si If one speaks in these sorts of terms, one posits an original home of the Aryans probably somewhere near the Caspian Sea, thousands of years B.C; some 7~A~YanS migrated down into India through the Khyber Pass, and others migrated in ~ South-westerly direction into Eastern Iran. Of course modern Indians would not believe that the Aryans actually came from outside, but I don't think that there's any doubt that they did.

~aqaramati: Don't the Greeks have a myth, the war between the g&ds and the Titans?

S: ...and the Titans. It might have the same source, infact very likely it does.

Abhava I M the Succession Myth as found in Greek mythology, isn't considered to be of Greek origin.

Si Which myth?

_____ The Successions of gods, well, Titans to the Olympians for instance. I think it comes from the Middle- East actually, Sumaria.

S: Well the Greeks themselves came from somewhere else, didn't they? (Pause) Yes?

A~hayai Varocana has two questions, the first one about the difference between the F.W.B.O. method of meditation and the Zen.

Verocana: This doesn't really relate directly to the talk, it's more a med~tion question that's been in my mind for quite a while now.~Zen Buddhist meditation and also the Martial Arts, quite a lot of emphasis is placed on theHar~, or more specifically the point just below the navel. MYou've always taught practises which are higher up. Do you have any reason for not emphasising this sort of lower way of using your energy? S: , does seem to be an introduction into Ch'an and

Karate and what-not, from Chinese, especially Taoistic sources. In the 'Vajrayana', as we find let's say in Tibet; they do enumerate seven 'Chakras', more or less corresponding to~th~ - 'Chakras' enumerated by the Hindu schools. But eve~~Vajrayana' practises are usually based on the four upper 'Chakras'. The lower three are not made the basis of any practise with very, very few exceptions. Perhaps the reasons for that are obvious. So this would seem to indicate that while from a Buddhist point of view there is no - as it wereM-objections in principle, to bringing lower chakras into the sphere of ones practise; it is

something to be done only very occasionally and very carefully, and within the proper framework.

S(ctd): I have sometimes said myself that if people feel themselves too much in the head, especially when doing 'mindfulness of breathing'; they can sink their attention a little into that region and be conscious of the rise and fall of the abdomen instead. But certainly in traditional standard buddhist meditation, and I say buddhist meditation specifically: not any system that incorporates non-buddhist influences; the I4&t~ as it's called in Japanese, doesn't really enter into it. This is not to say it shouldn't, or even that it needn't, but one must be quite conscious of what comes from traditional Buddhist sources and what is incorporated from elsewhere.

Sagaramati: You mean that if you concentrated too much on that region, that would give rise to what...cruder energies?

S: The broad general teaching is both as far as I know, in Hindu Tantra and in the buddhist 'Vajrayana'; that the Heart Chakra is the seat of the higher and more refined emotions, especially devotional feelings. Whereas the ~~~~~apura chakra, I think it's called is the seat of lower emotions. Especially of strong desire and anger, and so on; and therefore one should be most careful, not to activate that lower emotion centre, in a sense of course, well it is of course operating all the time but, if you concentrate on that chakra, I believe, you intensify that sort of lower emotion, as it were, direct your energy there. And of course the next centre down is the ~~~~~vaffesvana that is the seat of specifically genital and sexual energy. And then below that is the ~~~~~ulad~~~~va~~~~hich is the (at least this is the Hindu enumeration), which is the seat, so to speak of the Primordial energy which underlies all others. So the general sort of buddhist principle is that if you concentrate on the 'Chakras' at all, you should concentrate on those chakras which are, as it were, not yet developed and not yet open, or not yet sufficiently open and try to gather your energies there; rather than leading the energies down to lower chakras or say concentrating energies in lower chakras which in any case are pretty active already.

Some Tantric teachers, especially Hindu ones, not the Buddhist ones might argue that what you have to do is to fully activate the lower chakras and get them working really properly, and then lead that gross and coarse energy up, stage by stage. Probably Buddhism wouldn't altogether disagree with that in principle but would insist that it is very difficult and dangerous to do in practice. Usually you should concentrate here, because that's the next one up, where you do have some higher emotions, more refined emotions; but they're not very active, so you concentrate on the 'Heart Chakra', to make it more active; so that it becomes more active, energies are naturally drawn up

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S(ctd): from the lower chakras. You don't as it were, consciously develop the energy in the lower chakras and then lead it up to the next highest level. That's broadly speaking the reason why normally in Buddhism one works with the higher chakras.

Verocana: I've got another question. You start off the lecture by saying something briefly

about the different (Ugas) Of the universe.

S: This by the way is from the hindu tradition and I'm using it as a colourful introduction, not to be taken too literally as it were.

Verocana: I just wondered , do they actually fit into the whole scheme of the higher evolution. Could they be fitted in?

Si I really don't think I tried to do so. I just used them for their colourful symbolical value. I mean clearly the light, the rubies, the gold, the stones, they represent different stages of...involution. Whether they can be correlated with any particular buddhist scheme I'm not sure. I just introduced them as a sort of general illustration of the whole hierarchical principal.

~P~~~~~aY~~r~ So theugas are definitely not ever adopted by Budd~ism at all, cos you sometimes come ~rrpss Tibetan texts where they refer to this dreadfulKali-yuga.

S: 'Kali', that is not really buddhistici That has been taken over from Hindu tradition.

Sagramati: It's a bit deterministic.

S: Yes I would agree with that, yes. There seems to be a bit of determinism going+ftound the F.W.B.O. at the moment, because, I did hear that 6n the occasion of a certain recent women's retreat;the woman leading that retreat announced that the first few days weren't goingsto be a particularly good first few days of the retreat just before Christmas, because the stars weren't favourable. (Laughter).

Padmavajra' Seriously?

S: Yes! Yes, it was reported to me quite seriously.

Sagramati: This was the retreat leader?

S: Yes, yes;I am going to inquire into this. I don't want to jump~to any conclusions buttht6 was certainly what was related to me inasmuch as I'd had a letter not many days before that from another Women Order Member also invoking the stars in a particular connection. I started wondering whether an irrational astrological interest hadn't swept the movement again, at least in some part of it. Anyway I'm going to look into that.

Padmavajra: Heavens above! (Laughter).

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S(ctd): Otherwise we'll end up just fixing the dates for re- treats according to the stars (laughter)~ Yes, so if you're not careful you'll be saying:'that wasn't a very good retreat', or 'it was a very difficult one'. You know, Saturn was in the wrong place in my horoscope or something like that, But I'm afraid, these sorts of things keep cropping up every now and then. Astrology and Mediums. It's more among the women than the men, I'm sorry to say.

Padmavaira; Do you think it's based on insecurity?

S: Perhaps we shouldn't try to understand it in too much of a hurry, but clearly it isn't very positive or healthy, and there ha~been one or two men in the past who've been ef fec- ted by it;men Order members, but that was a couple of years ago. But I did wonder whether a sort of fresh wave wasn't going around of this sort of thing. Because it does represent a sort of abdication of personal responsibility. Anyway that is in passing.

Abhaya : Sagramati has a question about the relationship ~tw~n~'shradha' and 'adisthan'a'.

Sagramati: You mentioned that this pull of the unconditioned could be seen as the influence of a particular Buddha in his Buddha-'caitra', which we could experience as 'grace'. Could there be any connection between 'grace' in this sense and 'faith' as the emotional response in the individual to that unconditional pull?

S: Mmm..I think you could see them as complimentary;you could say that there is no receipt of grace or 'adistana' without a corresponding development of faith, on your part you know it is your faith which makes it possible for you to receive the adistana. No doubt the 'adistana' is there all the time, but if you are not open to it, if you don't have faith, if you're not sensitive to that, or you don't have that sort of upper aspiration. Well you are just not in a position to receive it. So, yes I think that conne- ction can definitely be made.

Sagramati: So in that case could there be (this is the question I've got) could there be actual different Bhudda Chaitras actually operative in our Universe, as it were?

S: Well, there is a sort of doctrine about this, a distin- ction is made between a Buddha's field of knowledge, and his field of influence. Buddhas are said to know all Buddha fields but their actual influence is confined to, so to speak, their own Buddha field. So, except perhaps - again we're up against these divisions and distinctions, except perhaps in the most metaphysical sense, there is not, within our own particular Buddha field the effective influence at least of all the Buddhas and Bhodisattvas, only of those that belong to this particular world system. That is the correct, as it were, doctrinal answer to the question, the traditional answer to the question. (Pause). But of course one can say: 'well, what does one mean by disting- uishing this Bodhisattva from that or that Buddha from this!'

Sagramati: Surely there must be, '-as it were' objective entities?

S: Yes, I wouldn't disagree with that, however difficult it might be to explain or justify philosophically, but yes, I wouldn't disagree with that in a manner of speaking, if you see what I mean. (Pause). I was listening to the radio the other day, to an interview with a cabinet minister; the last thing he said was 'as it were'. I th6ught, 'where have I heard that

before?' (Laughter). That was his last word, his last utterance, 'as it were', after giving a long explanation about his policies he said 'as it were'. A very useful sort of reservation.

Padinavajras Maybe you're . adisthana.

S: I don't know whether it's 'adhistana'. Was that it?

Sagramati: Yes.

S: I made the reference before but while we're on the subject of ~adhistanah. there is a very interesting explanation of this at the end of the English translation of the 'Heyvajra' Tantra. In the glossary. It's sort of tucked away. You could miss it. There's nearly a full page of explanation of this term,~it explains it very clearly, and very well. Snellgrove's translation, mmmm. Vol~me one, I think, the 'P\$evajra' Tantra, which is in the Order Library.

Ab;haya~~: Ratnaguna has a question about the four stages of the higher evolution.

Ratnaguna: Actually there's three questions about them. Firstly, did the Buddha talk about the ten fetters or was that a later formulation?

S: We don't know. But certainly the ten fetters are found in the 'Pali Canon', they're certainly found in the 'Nikayas' ;to what extent they are-- to be att~ibuted to the Buddhas own teaching , to what extent they are hie own formulations, well that is a question which can be asked with regards to all these numbered lists.

Ratnaguna: I ask it, because I know he didn't talk about the four levels of transcendental attainment, you know, stream entrant...

S: Yes, in that sort of schematized way at least, yes. But on the other hand, he could have talked in terms of ten fetters which could later on have been correlated with those, you know, four stages which had in the meantime come into existence. You see what I mean, yes?

Ratnaguna: That's my next question inf act.

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S: So that even if one demonstrated that these four stages were a later development, the fact that they were correlated with the ten fetters wouldn't prove, by itself that the ten fetters were a later development. Do you see what I mean? The Buddha does speak of fetters, but I mean, it can also.., we mustn't forget that the Buddha taught for forty-five years and he could have elaborated himself in the course of that period.

You remember when the Buddha sent out the first sixty disciples; what was the first thing he said:

"I am free from all fetters, human and divine, You too are free from all fetters human and divine."

Perhaps that was the first basic distinction, lower fetters and higher fetters. That is to say, fetters binding to the 'Karmaloka', and fetters binding to the 'Rupa' and 'Arupa' lokas, or at least the 'Rupaloka', and obviously, once you've made that subdivision, further subdivisions can follow. The Buddha may have made them himself; they may have been made by disciples; or, perhaps he started this process of subdivising, or subdivision, they finished it. Perhaps it is going to be possible one day to ascertain exactly what was due to the Buddha himself, and what to his disciples, but it's doubtful whether we can be sure at present, in the present state of our knowledge of the early Buddhist literature.

Ratnaguna: Can I just go back to...you said, that quote of the Buddha...'I am free of all fetters'..the distinction is ~human and divine, is it?

S: Yes, yes, in other words I mean, the text does not say this but I myself understand this as fetters pertaining to the human realm, well, perhaps one could say plus the realm of the gods of the Karmaloka, and the realm of the gods; howsoever that is subdivided. Another: gross fetters and subtle fetters. The 'Dharmapada' does speak of gross fetters and subtle fetters, probably it corresponds to the human and the divine fetters, but in any case, they both represent the totality of fetters, and that is also what the ten fetters represent, but in a more detailed manner.

Ratnaguna: Third question: the level of the once returner is attained by weakening the fourth and fifth fetters; this seems to be an imprecise categorisation, that is, how weak do these fetters have to become before one is a once returner? Whereas the other categories are quite definite, i.e. you must break certain fetters.

S: I don't think, as far as I can remember; the texts themselves offer no guidance here, they do speak simply of a weakening, or you know, diminishing. One might well ask: 'well, to what extent' but I suppose the answer is 'well, you will know in your own experience.' because you know what you have to work on to gain that next stage once

S: You've become a 'stream-entrant'. What you have to do is to work on your subtle ('ragha') and ('dghosa'), your subtle greed and anger, or hatred, and if you work on them a point will come when you pass onto the next stage and you will then know that within yourself. But no, as it were theoretical criteria is given to the best of my knowledge. It may ~ that somewhere in the depths of the 'abhidharma- kosa', you do find one, I'm not aware of that.

Ratnaguna: It just makes you wonder about the efficacy of having these four levels, one of them so imprecise.

S: Well they are a rough guide to practice, that's basically what they're intended for, in a way it's pretty clear that even if you're a stream entrant, you're left with a considerable residue of subtle greed and anger and you have to work vigorously on those two things, if you are to pass onto the next stage. In a way that is quite clear.

Sagramati: Isn't that, as it were guaranteed. I mean if you're a stream entrant, it's like your development is, as it were, guaranteed. So you can't help...

S: Uh, no, no, what is guaranteed is that you'll not fall back, there is of course the statement that you will gain, full enlightenment, gain 'nirvana' in not more than seven lifetimes. I'm disposed personally to regard that 'seven' as symbolical and not to take it literally, because that would mean that from that point onwards there was a species of determinism, but I think the correct understanding is that you cannot- fall back, but you may - as it were - 'stand still' for the time being. It's still up to you to make a further effort to progress. I don't think you could progress automatically, even at that level. I mean I wouldn't be too sure of that, but I'm inclined to regard the figure '7' in this connection as symbolical. Otherwise you wouldn't need to make any conscious effort at all, and that doesn't somehow seem quite right, unless it's of course our Protestant-work-ethic-background- conditioning. (Laughter).

Ratnaguna: You talk about the irresistible appeal of the unconditioned at this point.

Si But it would seem that the human mind is such, it can resist even the irresistible. It is sort of theoretically or in principle irresistible, one might say.

Padmavajra: Could it also be a question of maybe when you become a 'stream-entrant' your standards as it were get higher, so that, even though you're guaranteed of not 'falling back', that isn't actually enough for you, the way you approach development is quite different, something like that.

Si Yes, you wouldn't, if you were so serious as to have got that far, you wouldn't really think at that stage even of resting on your ~ars ;or perhaps I was going to say at that stage. The whole distinction between the sort of self effort or self-power and other power as we experience or understand, it changes almost. So that this whole issue of 'free-will' or determinism-doesn't have quite the same significance.

_____ : Is a stream-entrant likely to be conscious of the fact that he's a 'stream-entrant'?

S: Well again, what does one mean 'be conscious'? You know one will be aware of one's own experience, but how that experience is interpreted in terms of a particular theoretical framework. Whether handed down by tradition or not you may or may not know. Do you see what I mean? For instance, do you know that you are 5'6" tall? -(Laughter). You ARE 5'6" tall, and you feel, however tall you are, you may know that you are ~~~~ tall but you may not know it in terms of metres, do you see what I mean? So you may have an actual experience but without necessarily having a knowledge of the theoretical framework corresponding to that experience. I think that is a quite important distinction to understand. You have some 'Theravada' stories about illiterate 'arahants' and how they are questioned by learned 'bikkhus' and they come out with the whole contents of the 'Abidharmapitika'. Well, one can see what they're getting at, but they treat it in a ludicrously literalistic sort of manner. How are we getting on by the way?

Abha'a: We've got one, two, three, four questions left. ~addoa as a question about theistic notions and the first fetter.

Saddhaloka: As anyone, not a stream-entrant is not going to be free of 'self-view', might we assume that anyone following the spiritual life is going to transpose that view onto the spiritual level, and whatever their philosophical beliefs is going to be emotionally caught up in a 'god-view'.

Si Say that again, I'm not quite sure what you're getting at?

Saddhaloka: As anyone who's not a stream entrant is going to be, isn't going to be free of 'self-view'..?

S: Yes.

Saddhaloka: Might we also assume that anybody following the spiritual life is going to transpose that 'self-view' onto the spiritual level, so that -

S: Onto the level on which God exists,as it were.

Saddhaloka: Yes, so that whatsoever their philosophical beliefs they are going to be actually emotionally caught up in a God view.

S: I'd say not necessarily, because I'm thinking say of Taoist and Confusionists. They don't have any sort of 'theistic' view;there's a very vague belief in 'heaven' which is sometimes interpreted theistically but it would seem that because one is still subject to that first fetter, one doesn't necessarily have a theistic view. I think this is to assume almost the Universality of Theism. I think that can be doubted. see Sagramati: Wouldn't you see it, ot~something out there, whether you called it God or whatever?

S: Ah, but God has a very precise definition, that is to say 'The Creator', 'All Powerful', etc, etc. I think that the fact that you hadn't entered the 'stream' wouldn't necessarily mean that you had a particular view. I mean, for instance in the Buddha's day there were plenty of people around who were not 'stream-entrants' but, in his day theism was not really well developed, and there are very few references to it, in the 'Pali Canon'. So I would say No, the fact that you are not a stream-entrant doesn't mean that you necessarily hold any form of theistic belief, though within the context of christian or ex-christian civilisation, that is highly likely.

Sagramati: Isn't there always something? Like, Plato say, and you've got neo-platonism etc., even 'though they didn't have the christian theistic view, they had some element. I wouldn't say 'transcendental' element, but some divine element, that was an influence.

S: Well, there's nothing wrong in having that, I mean, in fact, that is desirable, and however vague or distorted form, you should have the conception or the feeling of something higher and different. But I think the fact that you are not yet a 'stream-entrant' doesn't necessarily mean that, that particular sense or conception must take a strictly theistic form. It may do, or it may not.

Abhaya: Coming back to 'Padmavajra', ~ question ai:~u~ t~e second fetter,

sorry the third fetter and the movement. Padmavajra: You mentioned in your exposition of this fetter, the F.W.B.O. should be watchful for the fetter of dependence on rites and ceremonies. Since that lecture, the F.W.B.O. has grown quite a lot, and I was wondering if there were any particular areas where we were prone to this fetter.

S: I was going to remind people that I discussed the three fetters in several other ways since, and perhaps your question should be read in the light of these further expositions, those broader expositions as it were. So let's take it that you asked your question in that more extended sense. So just repeat that last bit about the F,W,B,O.

Padmavajra: Since that lecture, the F.W.B.O. has grown out and I was wondering if there were any particular areas where we were more prone to this fetter?

Si: Of course, we must be very clear that it's not rites and ceremonies in the ordinary sense, and just because we now have more elaborate Pujas it means we are more prone to this fetter, No! It's a quite different type of thing, the fetter, and the question therefore is a quite different sort of question. I think I can't really say, I don't have any ideas on the subject at the moment; I just wonder whether anybody else, as a result of their experiences, say round centres or in communities or even co-ops has any sort of comment to offer?

Subhuti: In meditation, we can quite easily just put in ignorance on the cushion

S: Yes;

Subhuti:....and not actually be making any effort.

Si: Yes.

Subhuti: Or with the Puja, the something -your lips can be saying it, but you can be thinking of something else entirely.

S: I think this is why I spoke of the third fetter (I think) on one occasion as the fetter of habit.

Of superficiality.

S: Ah, superficiality.

Padmavajra: Going through the motions.

S: Going through the motions, yes, yes; I don't know whether this is more prevalent now than before. I think, if anything, less so, even though the actual number of those 'just going through the motions' may have increased, possibly. This is one of the advantages of a Co-op; because if you are working in a Co-op and, you know, just going through the motions, it's very quickly becomes obvious at least to the people who are trying to work with

you. Whereas if it is a question of going into a shrine and just sitting and not really meditating, it may not become obvious for weeks, if not for months, or years.

Padmavajra: I was wondering about it, actually on a sort of institutional level, as it were: Were there any particular institutions in the F.W.B.O., like the community, centre, co-op, community-complex, and whether in any of these you wondered about this fetter, particularly. whether you thought people were dependent on them, or just going through the motions in them or; even seeing them as ends in themselves.

13~ S: Well, say, take Centres. I think in the case of Centres, there's a growing realisation that you can't just sort of sit in your Centre waiting for people to 'come along' - that you've got to go out to people. I think that this growing realisation is certainly counteracting any possible tendency to see Centres as ends in themselves, or just to be going through the motions of running a Centre. Can anyone think of any other possible areas where this third fetter might be operative?

_____ I've often felt that the making of offerings to the shrine has become a bit of a fashion, that everyone in the shrine-room does it because that's the thing to do at the time.

Si In this connection there was something that struck me in the current 'Shabdha' about I think, this was in connection with the L.B.C. about giggles, at the time of of giggling at the time of making offerings. I was really surprised. I wondered what all that was about because I hadn't personally encountered it.

Voice' I'm going to set a revolt against giggling,

Si So why do you think that is? What is it all about?

Sflbbuti: I think sometimes people when they make special offerings, play to the audience.

S: Ah!

Subhuti: And they're not actually making an offering, they're just showing off, really...

Si Either their cleverness or something a bit individual - so 'well, I don't do things in the traditional way that everybody else does!' Yes.

Padmavajra: Sometimes I think people want to play the fool as well. You know they might in a way go to the Puja, not to perform Puja but to have a laugh.

S: So it really means that one needs to be quite cautious, perhaps more cautious than one has been in connection with the making of offerings., especially special offerings.

I remember something a little like this in the old days, this was Aryatarailong, long

before the present management took over (laughter). Long, long before when one articulate member of the community insisted on having his own shrine in the middle of the shrine room; built up entirely of bits of stone and earth, and a few leaves, and twigs and things. They insisted on having that there; he insisted that, that is how he felt about shrines and puja and that he should be free to do it in his own way, according to his own devotional feelings.

S(continued): I remember one occasion on which an offering raised a very slight laugh, in Tuscany; that was when someone offered a model of a skull. I'm not quite sure why people laughed, maybe it sort of took them by surprise or it seemed a bit incongruous to put on the shrine but it wasn't much of a laugh, it certainly wasn't a giggle. That was I think on the very first Tuscany. Do you remember? I do. Someone offered or modelled or carved a skull. I remember who it was but I won't tell you at the moment; but it seemed very strange to me. Because I'd never encountered anything like that in the East. Also I wonder whether, this is going into it a little more deeply, people aren't sometimes ashamed of their own devotional feelings and they try to cover it up. They try to cover those feelings up and try to make it that they're not really as moved as in fact they actually are, in some cases.

Saddhalokai I get the impression that it's more just a lack of a feel for ritual and that sort of thing.

Ratnaguna Also, I remember some devotional pujas in Tuscany, some special Pujas seemed quite charged with emotion.

Si Yes! Indeed!

Ratnaguna: Almost like a lump just bulged out of people (?).

S: Yes, but I think we have to be careful that it doesn't become a sort of practise; that on festival day you just line everybody up and everybody has to make an offering. Because I remember in the old days, you know ten, twelve years ago, when I think the first time when there were 'special' offerings; some people made and some didn't. And it was well understood that you came up to the front and made an offering if you felt like it. If you didn't, well you didn't. But I think we have to be quite careful it doesn't just become something everybody does, therefore they just, or some people just go through the performance in a mechanical sort of way.

Abhaya In Tuscany, people were encouraged to bring their own offerings, because actually having the offering at the shrine does tend to make it a bit more mechanical. You know, you just walk in line, there's a bit of incense there; but if you consciously get your own offering

S: Mmm. again I have noticed in the past. I didn't notice it. I must say this time, that some people are scurrying round at the last minute, thinking 'gosh, I've got to go and get some flowers'. Nipping up, grabbing the nearest flower from the hedge and dashing back (laughter). You see what I mean?

Sudhana: I do sometimes feel that going through the motions sometimes brings out people. Sometimes I don't feel like making an offering and afterwards I'm glad I did go

through the motions cos

Si Well, I wouldn't say that was just going through the motions. You are doing it as discipline; aware that you don't at present have much feeling, but hoping that by just performing the corresponding action you will generate some feeling. I couldn't describe that as merely 'going through the motions'. No~ Anyway let's pass on shall we?

Abha a : There's just one more. I'll say it's a little question, it may not be Sagramatti?

Si I'll have to be careful of these little questions, especially when they come from Sagramatti.

Abhaya ... the significance of the phrase 'broken one ~ one'.

Sagramatti You mentioned that the fetters are 'broken one by one'. Are the first three fetters so interrelated with 'self-view', the sort of central one upon which the other two rest, that they all go together?

S: I believe that the traditional view is that they are broken 'one by one'.

Sagramatti: 'One by one'.

S: But nonetheless, it's clear one can regard them as different aspects of the same, in a sense, problem. Again, at the same time your being, your psyche, is quite complex and it could be that it takes a while for the realisation which corresponds with 'stream-entry', to work its way through your system. And it might effect, so to speak, one part of your system and therefore one particular fetter, before it effected another part and another fetter. Do you see what I mean, that is quite possible. Because sometimes one doesn't always see the implications even of one's own realisations. It takes some time for that realisation to spread to other areas of one's understanding and consciousness, and being. But you ought to see the logical consequences but you just don't sometimes; there's some sort of block and it takes time for the influence even of a genuine realisation to work its way all round your system. But it's certainly not a question of just sort of ticking off fetters 'one by one'.

They are all inter-connected; they're matted, and knotted, and tangled together. You can hardly see where one ends and the other begins. They really are a sort of tangled mass. [140]

Sagramatti: We were discussing the problems that study group leaders have in dealing with especially tricky questions like the idea of free will and determinism. Put it this way:- We don't seem to have any answer to such a question. So could you give us an example of how Buddhism deals with it?

S: Well, I think I mentioned the other evening that in the context of Indian thought this question as far as I know just doesn't arise. It seems to have been a specifically Western problem.

Sagaramati: we are going to be dealing with people ...

S: I must say I haven't given it much thought. It's never been a problem which has troubled me. Though I've got one or two aphorisms on the subject, but it's never been a problem that's troubled me. I've never sort of puzzled and asked, well, am I free, or am I not. If I raise my hand, well I'm free to do it. All right: I'm going to raise my hand (raises hand). Is that a free action; a result of my free volition, or was I predestined to do it from eternity? That to me has never appeared a problem.

Sagaramati: It's a purely abstract problem.

S: Yes, perhaps that needs to be gone in to more. I've only got that little aphorism which perhaps I can recommend as material for reflection: That you just have action; an experience and you superimpose on that action the notion of it being free or not free. So perhaps one could approach it from that point of view. But it would be very interesting to investigate, and I've never done this. How this whole problem, this whole notion of determinism arose in the West, whereas it didn't in the East. Were they obtuse in the East or did they, in the West create a purely artificial problem for certain reasons which were peculiar to the West? I'm not even sure when it really first arose. Was it with Aristotle, or with the Fathers of the Christian church? I think maybe I should look it up in 'Hastings'. Hastings is an encyclopedia of religion and ethics. I'm sure there are lengthy articles on free will and determinism, which may or may not give the history of the controversy.

Sagaramati: I would imagine it comes along with a sort of scientific way of looking at the world, which starts with Aristotle.

S: Because whether one is right or not one feels free.

Sagaramati: I think Schopenhauer says it is artificial in the sense ...

S: But then again you can be hypnotised, and while in the state of hypnosis you can be told "when emerging from this state you are going to do such-and-such. So sure enough you emerge from the state and you actually perform that action, but you're under the impression that you just performed it because you wanted to. So one has to take into account consideration of that sort too, perhaps.

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So perhaps, without entering into controversy, if you get this sort of question you can say well, this is not a question that arises in the context of Buddhist thought. So, therefore, I make the point that perhaps this is a purely artificial question and therefore perhaps we ought to try to look at it in that light first, and try to leave it at that.

Subhuti: It's one of Kant's (antinomies) ...

S: Yes.

Subhuti: ... which shows that both are impossible.

S: Yes, and therefore that the dichotomy represents an unreal situation. Yes, you could

perhaps treat it along those lines. Like the dichotomy of space: it cannot be finite and it cannot be infinite either. So that means that the categories of space and time, and presumably of free will and determinism are just categories of our understanding which don't in fact really fit reality.

Sagaramati: I think Schopenhauer says it's because you're self-conscious, you can imagine yourself behaving other than you actually did. So therefore you get the idea of choice.

S: This is virtually what I say: that you just have the experience of acting and you superimpose on that either the idea of your action being free or of it being determined. But actually those categories are inapplicable or unnecessary. So perhaps one could take some such approach.

Abhaya: You mentioned at the beginning of your answer that you had one or two aphorisms. Was there another one in your mind.

S: No, I just thought there were one or two in 'Peace is a Fire'. I can only remember that one, so maybe there was in fact only one.

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Subhuti: We've got a couple of questions left over from yesterday which we some-how missed. The first of those is from Padmavajra.

Padmavajra: When did the Wheel of Life come together as an image?

S: We probably need to read up on this but as far as I remember there is a description of the Wheel of Life in the Diviavadana(?) I think and also of course, it is well known there is a pictorial representation of the Wheel of Life in one of the Ajanta caves. Or what now appears to be such because I believe, since the caves were discovered some of the paintings have deteriorated so I think identification of that particular painting as a painting of the Wheel of Life was made some years ago, and it's barely recognisable as such now, but that again, you'd have to check up on. The principal significance of these two points is that the pictorial representation of the Wheel of Life as we have it in Tibetan tradition is of Indian origin and not of Tibetan origin.

Ratnaguna: The Diviavadana(?)? Is that from the Pali Canon?

S: No that is a Sanskrit work. Divine glorious deeds or divine heroic deeds of the Buddha's disciples and to some extent the Buddha himself in previous existences.

Abhaya: Tejmitra has a small question on the Wheel of Life.

Tejmitra: This actually comes from this current lecture. it's just a question of nomenclature, really, I think. In it you introduce the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara and then talking about the six realms, he appears as a Buddha in each of the six realms - so he's a Bodhisattva and then a Buddha. Why is that?

S: Well, in a sense, he's not a Bodhisattva - he is said to be a Buddha appearing in Bodhisattva form so one could say that Avalokitesvara who is a Buddha appearing in Bodhisattva form, again appears as an historical Buddha or as a phenomenal Buddha or Nirmanakaya in each of those six realms. But even if one doesn't take Avalokitesvara as a Buddha appearing in Bodhisattva form, a great Bodhisattva is usually described in that way - it would still not be beyond the capability of a great Bodhisattva to transform himself in appearance at least, into a Buddha. But I think we're meant to take the Buddhas as so to speak, 'real' Buddhas. 'Real' Nirmanakaya Buddhas. With regard to this whole question of Buddhas appearing as Bodhisattvas, one has to beware of literal- mindedness.

Ratnaguna: Do you think that the Wheel of Life was a Buddhist image or do you think it was taken over from other cultures?

S: Well, to the best of my knowledge there is no parallel to that in any non-Buddhist Indian tradition. It would seem to be a purely Buddhist conception. In Sanskrit it's called Bhavanachakra by the way which is not so much Wheel of Life as one could say 'Wheel of Existence or 'Wheel of Becoming'. It's a short a by the way - Bhava, not Bhava.

Ratnaguna; Buddhism doesn't recognise the existence of a creator God, however, until we have some direct experience of the trans- cendental, we don't actually knpw from our own experience that God doesn't exist. We take it on faith.

S: In a way you don't need to know that God doesn't exist, because

he isn't sort of immediately apparent, as it were. Do you see what I mean?

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Ratnaguna: I'm thinking more in terms of discussion with people- you get someone who does believe in God and we don't believe in God...

S: Yes but it's a question of at what level you encounter. I've said before that if someone say comes to a beginners' class or some open event and they do beleive in God, it's quite pointless to argue that point in that particular situation. So the best thing you can do in that situation is just to get the person to put the question of God aside which means that you've also got to put the question aside of 'no-God'. And say that Buddhism doesn't recognise the existence of a personal God, but this is not in a way, the main point - the main point with which Buddhism is concerned is the development of the individual here and now. The purification of the mind. Leading an ethical life.

So this is what we are basically concerned with and perhaps when we've made further progress well, we can know for ourselves whether there is a God or whether there is not. But I think it is a mistake to try to argue this particular point at too early a stage of someone's

involvement because if they do believe firmly in God or identify belief in God with religion itself, well you may just put them off by insisting on the non-theistic attitude of Buddhism. You may just bewilder them because they may not be able to imagine a religion which doesn't believe in God. So especially if it's a meditation class that they've come to, well, it's quite easy to keep the discussion along practical lines.

I remember when I was talking beginners' meditation classes, when I invited questions, I always used to say, if you've got any questions now is the time for bringing them up but please let's start at least with questions which directly pertain to the practice of meditation, in fact to the practical spiritual life itself. I said that partly to obviate anybody just raising purely theoretical issues which might lead to unnecessary argumentation.

Subhuti: We've got some historical questions. Firstly Abhaya.

Abhaya: In the Survey, Bhante, you outlined the three main phases in the development of Buddhism in India. First of all the first 500 years - the Hinayana, the second 500 years - the Mahayana; the third 500 years - the Vajrayana. Recently you introduced the phrase, 'Archaic Buddhism'. We wondered how long roughly, you consider that archaic Buddhism lasted, and secondly, is it more accurate to think of the Mahayana developing alongside and almost as much as the Hinayana in the first 500 years, in view of what you've been saying recently about the Mahayana being there from the very beginning rather than to think in terms of the first phase being predominantly Hinayana?

S: Yes, you mentioned the word 'predominantly'. I think perhaps that is the key to it. I think it was very likely that the Hinayana was in fact predominant during that first 500 year period. Some scholars have argued that the Hinayana did in fact remain dominant even during the so-called Mahayana phase, in as much as even for those monks who were followers of the Mahayana, they continued to follow the Hinayana Vinaya and studied the Abhidharma and so on. Yuan Chwang - I think it is Yuan Chwang - in a famous passage does say that Mahayana and Hinayana monks lived side by side in the same vihara and the only difference between them was that the Mahayana monk studied the Mahayana sutras and worshipped the Bodhisattvas by which he didn't mean that they did only that (continued on next page).

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but that they did that in addition to all the other things that the Hinayana Bhiksus were doing.

Abhaya: Worshipped the Bodhisattvas and what was the other?

S.: And studied the Mahayana sutras which, of course, strictly Hinayana Bhikhus did not do. So I only make that point not because I don't personally believe that the Mahayana, at least, as it were, was qualitatively predominant in that second period, but just to indicate the fact that one can't separate the Yanas completely, but even though one was dominant, the other was quite effectively present nonetheless. I think it's probably correct to say that the Hinayana was formulated before the Mahayana, during that 500 year period, the Mahayana was probably still in a sort of phase of purely spiritual transmission, to a greater extent than the Hinayana was - even though some of the Mahayana sutras are relatively early, as literary

documents. But yes, one mustn't think of, for instance, only Hinayana existing and then there suddenly was a sort of movement or reaction against the Hinayana and the Mahayana as it were, beginning from that point - No'. There was definitely a sort of Mahayana tradition - a living tradition going back directly to the Buddha, through the Mahasangikas probably~alongside the Hinayana tradition. Though it would seem that at that stage the Hinayana tradition was the predominant one and also the more highly developed in the sense of being more fully articulated or more fully formulated. Apropos of the question on Archaic Buddhism, I think one could regard that as lasting roughly one hundred years. That is to say, during the lifetime of the Buddha or the Buddha's teaching life and the lifetime of at least the third generation of disciples after him. In the Survey I've spoken of 'original Buddhism' - 'original' and 'developed'. 'original Buddhism' can be taken as comprising Archaic Buddhism plus the Hinayana. I haven't really distinguished them there, but I think now, I would prefer to distinguish the two and have that 100 year period of Archaic Buddhism - even though during that 100 year period elements of 'what became Hinayana' were discernible, as far as one can tell from the record. Just as elements of what became the Mahayana were discernible. But what one mustn't sort of think of is a sort of Luther-like situation, because Luther for the early part of his life was a Catholic, because there was nothing but Catholicism in Western Europe and he broke away from that, so to speak, to form something completely new or relatively new, which became Lutheranism. He did not belong to or revive a separate independent tradition which already existed alongside Catholicism. Do you see what I mean? But that was not the case with the Mahayana - that was not the case, say, with Nagarjuna. There was already a living tradition to which Nagarjuna belonged which existed alongside the Hinayana, which he brought into greater prominence, which he developed through his expositions and so on.

Tejananda~ Surely the Hinayana as such, was only called so in retrospect by the Mahayana.

S.: Yes, I'm using the term for convenience for a whole sort of cluster of schools of which in fact the most important was the Sarvastivada. What became the Theravada being less important. The Sarvastivada were really the dominant school for at least 500 years - probably more than 500 years. And the Mahayana inherited, so to speak, not only their dharma but also their version of the Vinaya. (Pause)

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Subhuti: Tejananda has a question of the emergence of the old traditions.

Tejananda: a. Can we take it that historically the earliest Mahayana sutras originated after the lifetime of the Buddha? b. Is there any indication as to when and how the earliest Mahayana sutras such as the Saddharmapundarika sutra actually did appear? c. Similarly do we have any idea as to when and how the Tantra~actually started to appear?

S.: Go through that point by point.

Tejananda: Can we take it that historically the earliest Mahayana sutras originated after the lifetime of the Buddha?

S.: This is a less simple question than it might appear. What does one mean by originate? We've got really two things. We've an oral tradition and we've got a writing down of that oral tradition in literary form. So that the Buddha taught orally, so whatever sutras we have as literary texts, clearly are or purport to be, writings down of oral traditions. Do you see what I mean? So we've really no way of knowing, in a very definitive sort of way, which part, say, of a surviving document, is actually based on an oral tradition going in that form back to the Buddha and which is not. Do you see what I mean? There are two or three rough and ready guidelines, for instance, if a particular text or a particular document contains references to historical events that we know are later than the lifetime of the Buddha, well, we know in that particular form - we must be careful to say that - in that particular form, that particular document cannot be entirely based upon oral tradition going back to the Buddha. For instance, if an Abhidharma refers to Ashoka, well, clearly we know that that cannot in its entirety be based on an oral tradition going back to the Buddha. Again within certain texts we can see a process of development, a process of elaboration, so we can assume that the later more elaborated form probably does not go back to the Buddha, though there's a sort of continuity with traditions or teachings that do go back to the Buddha. You see the sort of situation that we're in? In most cases we don't know exactly when a particular sutra was written down. And another difficulty is that so many of the sutras were formed or reached their present extent due to a sort of process of accretion extending in some cases over a period of centuries, during which chapter after chapter was added. But whether chapters were added from an existing oral tradition or were a purely literary elaboration, very often we don't know. So it isn't a very straight-forward situation. What I hope will be my forthcoming book on Buddhist canonical literature will give some idea of all this and help to introduce some clarity. So that was the first clause. How does that tie in with Suvajra: said last night about what the Buddha most likely said

S.: Well, as I said there was or seems to be a process of elaboration going on which very often was a process of analysis and further sub-division of existing doctrinal categories and it would seem that the further we go back in history, the nearer we get to what seems to be the Buddha's time, the simpler those categories become and the freer the treatment of them and the more the spirit of the Buddha's teaching emerges from those categories in a way that it doesn't perhaps in the later more elaborate version

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so in that way we begin to feel that certain parts of scriptures containing these, as it were, earlier versions or more simple versions are in fact earlier than the elaborate ones and therefore more likely to be the teaching of the Buddha, himself. I think it's probably impossible for us to be sure that any particular teaching in any of the Buddhist scriptures was taught by the Buddha exactly in that particular form or in that particular form of words. But certainly we can get a very good idea of the general direction and trend of the teachings, and that means that we can identify the earlier form of that teaching in comparison with the later one. And clause two?

Tejananda: Is there any indication as to when and how the earliest Mahayana Sutras such as the Saddharmapundarika Sutra actually did appear?

S.: The Saddharmapundarika seems to have appeared - at least the greater part of

it - not the last third - around the beginning of the Common Era. Another very early sutra is of course the Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 lines which belongs to the same period - as literary documents. To what extent or in what sense even those literary documents represent the writing down of existing oral tradition - this we simply do not know. There are some quite old sutras found in the Vasnakuta collection, which probably belonged in their earlier or nuclear forms to even the previous century, perhaps to the previous ~tv~ --centuries. We must remember that some of these Mahayana sutras had undergone constant adding to, and editing and revising and sometimes of course, portions of sutras were.. bigger sutras attract, as it were, smaller sutras which become chapters in the larger sutras. It's a quite complex process. It's much more complicated than the process of the formation of the New Testament canon but much less studied, I think, but you get some idea of what went on I think, from this new book of mine. And three?

Tejananda: Similarly do we have any idea as to when and how the Tantras actually started to appear?

S.: Well we know that the same principle applies that they were originally an oral tradition and later written down. The writing down seems to have started about - to give a very round figure - about 1000 A.C. - after the Common Era which is quite late of course. But Tantra continued to be written down, well even until very recently. There are some Hindu tantras that weren't written down till the last century. For instance, one of the very late Buddhist tantras, which is the vajrachakra, contains references to the Muslim invasions of India, so it must be pretty late as a literary document or as a literary document in that particular form. So sometimes Sutras, in other words, which are very late, as total compositions contain extremely early material as well as very late material. And sometimes one can sort it out with the help of linguistic tests, especially in the Pali canon, there are archaic forms of Pali - closer to Vedic Sanskrit - less archaic forms which are closer to classical Sanskrit, so one can tell when that particular passage was written down by following that criterion. For instance, if you as a scholar-expert in the history of English literature, was to be given a page, say, of the authorized version of the Bible - even if you didn't know it was a page of the authorized version of the Bible, from its language you would know that it must belong to the early 17th century.

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You know it could not possibly have been written in the 18th century unless by someone deliberately imitating that particular style. It's rather like that. So if you find in a particular document, let's say, a chapter in a style corresponding to Jacobean English and then another passage in a style approximating, say, to Queen Anne's English, well, you'd know that the first one was earlier than the second one. This is a very sort-of crude comparison, but it's a bit like that. Just let me add something here - that it's all made more complicated by the fact that in later periods, copyists who were copying Buddhist texts, sometimes liked to smooth out the style, as they thought fit. It's like someone in the 18th century, copying out a passage of the authorized version, might think that certain grammatical forms were mistakes and correct them, as he went along. This sort of thing also happens quite a lot and sometimes the corrections are miscorrections. So it all becomes quite

complicated.

Suvajra: To what extent do you think that the Mahayana Bodhi-sattva ideal - both doctrine and myth - was based upon the Bodhisatta tradition of early Buddhism?

S.: The two seem quite separate in a sense, and some scholars argue that the Bodhisatta tradition came before the Bodhisattva tradition - that is a point that is under dispute but we do know that the ten Paramis of the Pali canon are quite different from the ten Paramitas of the Sanskrit scriptures. -Or rather what became the classical Sanskrit version of the Bodhisattva ideal. though again, even in Sanskrit, that's not uniform - the Mahāvastu contains a quite different list of the ten Directions. The list has not been sort of standardized. Some scholars do believe that the Theravada developed the Bodhisattva ideal to a very limited extent, as it were, in imitation of the Mahayana, just to keep up a bit. But some scholars believe that if anything, it was the other way around. I believe that this disagreement isn't really settled to the general satisfaction of scholars. Of course, here, one is referring to not the Bodhisattva ideal in the full sense, but to the particular version of the previous career of Gautama the Buddha. That of course is the starting point in any case, whether influenced by the Hinayana or not, of the Mahayana's own development of the Bodhisattva ideal - historically speaking. I'd mentioned this somewhere, hadn't I?

Subhuti: Does the phase of the development of the Buddha's previous career belong to archaic Buddhism? Do we know that?

S.: I mentioned this a few evenings ago. It would seem in its more developed form, not to belong to archaic Buddhism. The Buddha does refer, in what seems to be the most archaic texts, to predecessors, but it would seem that references to those predecessors by name occur only in what would seem to be quite late versions, late portions of the Pali canon. We find the list lengthening till we get a list of 21 predecessors in the Pali canon itself.

Suvajra: You mentioned the Bodhicitta is not found in the list of the five Skandhas, ~~~ contained in the five Skandhas?

S.: It is a statement of - I think it is Vasubandhu - that the Bodhicitta is not contained in the Five Skandhas.

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Suvajra: I was thinking that the five Skandhas are not used as the basis for the Abhidharma but the Transcendental element is included in the Abhidharma as the last two in the list. Does the Mahayana include the Bodhicitta in their list of the Abhidharma?

S.: As I mentioned the Mahayana inherited the Hinayana Abhidharma. Within the Mahayana, it really seems that it was the Yogacara school that was more closely associated with the Abhidharma tradition. And they did, as it were, modify that to some extent. I have discussed this before in Tuscany or one of the Tuscany's - I don't remember that in the Yogacara Abhidharma tradition, they do actually speak in terms of the Vinyana Skandha, as being divisible into transcendental and mundane Vinyanas. I don't remember any specific reference, but it may be that there is somewhere or other - that that is the import of their

understanding of the Abhidharma. But one important point I want to make here is that it's a question of the interpretation in a way, of the five Skandhas themselves. TbWt is quite an ancient Buddhist formula. We can't be quite sure that it was used by the Buddha himself, though it may have been, because it is a fairly rudimentary one. Whether the Bodhicitta is to be included in the five Skandhas or not depends upon whether you define the Vinyana Skandha as including both mundane and transcendental cittas or not. Vasubandhu, when he makes that statement that the Bodhicitta is not included in the five Skandhas would seem to imply that the interpretation of the five Skandhas was one which regarded Vinyana - the fifth skandha as purely mundane. But if you were to subdivide that fifth skandha, the Vinyana Skandha, so as to include the transcendental vinyana or citta, then presumably he would not have to say, that the Bodhicitta was not included in the five Skandhas. So I think the whole question revolves around the precise definition or interpretation of the five Skandhas. Because there are passages in the Pali canon where the Buddha speaks of an intrinsically pure Vinyana. The Theravadans will not agree that that is synonymous with Nirvana, but it would seem that that is the meaning of the passage. So if you have got this intrinsically pure Vinyana which is equivalent to Nirvana then presumably, this, is as much as it is a Vinyana, is to be included in that Vinyana Skandha. Do you see what I mean? So, one can't really deal with the question of whether the Bodhicitta is to be included in the five Skandhas or not, without dealing with the question of well, what exactly do the five Skandhas include, especially the fifth Skandha, the Vinyana Skandha? I believe that the general modern Theravada attitude is that the five Skandhas are all only mundane and that the Vinyana Skandha is also mundane therefore, and that Nirvana cannot be spoken of as a vinyana. Of course, in the case of the Theravada there would be no question of Bodhicitta because they don't have any such teaching. So therefore, they think of Nirvana as a state consisting of complete cessation of the five Skandhas and which cannot be spoken of in terms of consciousness, not even of an intrinsically pure consciousness. The Vinyanavadins and the Yogacarins did speak of the 'Absolute', so to speak in terms of Citta, or even of Vinyana - whatever that might mean. There are all sorts of interpretations. But it would seem that just as one cannot exclude for want of a better term, 'transcendental' factors from the full series of the Nidanas, so you cannot exclude them from a complete enumeration of the five Skandhas. You can of course, as a matter of definition, maintain that the five skandhas are all essentially conditioned, but then you've got to have another classification which would include (continued on next page)

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both the conditioned factors and the elements which are, so to speak, not conditioned or which are transcendental. And that is of course, done in the Abhidharma, as you pointed out, when there is that four-fold classification which replaced the original five-fold classification represented by the five skandhas.

Subhuti: There is a question from Ratnaprabha about the Bodhisattva and the language of stream-entry.

Ratnaprabha: The question arose from a discussion of what you've said to correlate

stream-entry, the Bodhicitta and irreversibility - that is the irreversible Bodhisattva. Despite what you've said on the subject I wonder if there is not genuinely an ideal of individual enlightenment which is in a sense (break in tape) and represents the cessation of bodily influence in the Samsara but which is in some sense, a less complete or smaller manifestation of Compassion than the Enlightenment of a Buddha, who gained Enlightenment in a world where there is no Dharma? And we've located stream-entry on our chart of the higher and lower evolution - that is the triangle with the hypotenuse - can we locate the Bodhisattva's irreversibility on the same chart?

S.: I think it goes back to something that I've said before - that traditionally the Mahayana has regarded the Mahayana itself and the Path of the Bodhisattva as following on the Hinayana and the Path of the Arahant. But that cannot really be historically justified, so one sees as it were, the Hinayana ideal of the Path and of the goal of Arahantship as so to speak, a more attenuated version of what was presented more fully in the Mahayana's Path of the Bodhisattva. Because it would seem, if we go back say, to Archaic Buddhism (break in tape) an Arahant ideal in the later Hinayana sense. He did not distinguish it would seem, between the content of his disciples' Realization and his own. So therefore, I don't personally place the Hinayana and the Mahayana end to end. I place them rather side by side. The one being more attenuated and the other a more fuller version of the same spiritual path. Now inasmuch as each version, the Hinayana, the Mahayana version - underwent considerable independent development, in respect of these independent developments, we can't always make them coincide or correspond point by point. You see what I mean? So there are developments of the idea of the irreversibility of the Bodhisattva that don't quite correspond to the idea of the irreversibility of the stream-entrant. But that is because the Mahayana doctrinally elaborated on its own particular tradition in that non-historical perspective. What I've been trying to do is to pull them all back to what they're really all talking about; what they're really all concerned with and to see the points of general correspondence. So drawing things back in that way, I see stream-entry, within the as it were, the Hinayana context, corresponding to 'irreversibility' within the, as it were, Mahayana context.

Ratnaprabha: Stream-entry corresponds to irreversibility or to the 'arising of the Bodhicitta'?

S.: No, to irreversibility, because I see the two Paths as side by side - not one following upon another, so there's no question of another point for Bodhisattva's irreversibility further along on that same hypotenuse. Because it is, as it

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Subhuti: So a rough correlation would be the arising of the Bodhicitta and the arising of Faith? .. in so far as the arising of Faith is the beginning of the Path leading to stream-entry and the arising of the Bodhicitta is the beginning of the Path leading to irreversibility.

S.: One could make such a correlation.

Subhuti: Because what it amounts to is the transcendental entering into life but not being yet decisive in the dimension of stream-entry - that's faith.

S.: I think the main point in this case, one has to bear in mind is that as I did say, one can't have a completely neat and tidy, point by point, or factor by factor, correlation, just because the Hinayana and the Mahayana don't develop independently.

Padmavajra: Would it not be better to drop, if one can possibly do that, the irreversibility that occurs in the eightfold path - just drop that from the picture and just speak in terms - just try to correlate stream-entry and the arising of the Bodhicitta?

S.: Well, one could do that, but then in as much as one has started the correlation of doctrinal terms of the two yantras. Somebody is sure to ask sooner or later, where that comes in. You're not going to be able to exclude it. You have to give some sort of explanation.

Ratnaprabha: So how literally should we take the usual explanation of Bodhisattvas' irreversibility? If we do quote it (break in tape)

S.: Well, what is that irreversibility from? I think that is the key to the whole issue. It is irreversibility from Enlightenment for the sake of all beings. But my point is that you can't really have any other kind of Enlightenment. So that the moment you set off on the spiritual Path, well, that is your aim and object and as soon as you become irreversible on the spiritual Path, well, in Hinayana terms, that is 'entering the stream' and in Mahayana terms, that is 'becoming an irreversible Bodhisattva'. The strictly Mahayana notion of irreversibility in the case of the Bodhisattva, presupposes an earlier, as it were, more restricted irreversibility - that of the stream-entrant leading to the Arahant. But we don't admit that that earlier, as it were, literally individualistic phase of genuinely spiritual life. For us that is a sort of anomaly - a sort of contradiction in terms. And that way of looking at it, seems to be more in accordance with what seems to have been the Buddha's own original teaching.

Ratnagyna: Is not irreversibility 'Samyak Sambodhi' - i.e. not just Enlightenment but. ...

S.: That's what I say, Enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings - that is Samyak Sambodhi and it would seem that that was the Enlightenment that the Buddha saw his own disciples attain - so that stream-entry was irreversibility from that originally - but it came eventually to be seen by the Hinayanists as 'irreversibility' from one's own individual salvation.

Ratnaguna: I was thinking more than that Samyak Sambodhi being in a future life, you find yourself without the Dharma and you re-discover the Dharma, Is that not what it's supposed to be?

S.: In the Mahayana, yes - there is that, as it were, cosmic perspective, as I call it - but you don't find that in the - what would

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were, a more open-ended version of stream-entry itself, or rather you might say that Hinayana stream-entry is a narrower version of what the Buddha himself was originally talking about which the Mahayana tried to get back to.

Voice: So stream-entry and irreversibility are synonymous?

S.: Broadly speaking yes, as formulated - stream-entry as formulated by the Hinayana and irreversibility as formulated by the Mahayana are not the same, if you see them out of their context of historical development. But if you understand how they are each historical developments - the one narrower than the other, and the other partly in protest against the narrower previous development - you can see that they are really concerned about the same thing. You don't have the idea that there is really a Path of individual Enlightenment in the way that the Hinayana thinks. That one regards as a sort of deformation. So therefore you don't regard the emergence of, so to speak, Compassion as a separate stage further on, under the auspices of the Bodhisattva ideal in the way that the traditional Mahayana does.

Padmavajra: You might have already said this but - so stream-entry, irreversibility, and the arising of the Bodhicitta are all the same spiritual experience, in fact.

S.: I'm not saying that the arising of the Bodhicitta because one is distinguishing - one has to be careful about that - because in the Mahayana, the arising...

(End of Side A) (Part of recording missing)

S so within the context of the Mahayana you can certainly not equate the arising of the Bodhicitta and irreversibility.

Padmavajra: How does that square with the fact that in Tuscany you were saying that the arising of the Bodhicitta was the altruistic aspect of the experience of stream-entry - you seemed to equate the arising of the Bodhicitta and stream-entry. Is it that you can't lump irreversibility in as well.

S.: You might, but that is a sort of later stage of consideration, as it were. But when one speaks of the arising of the Bodhicitta, one is referring to - or taking the arising of the Bodhicitta to refer to the emergence of the factor of Compassion which seems to be, as it were, divorce & roughly divorced from the Path of the Arahant. Because in fact, you can't have a spiritual life without that dimension. So if you take the arising of the Bodhicitta as a sort of separate event, well, then you can only describe it within this wider context, as an aspect of the stream-entry itself.

Padmavajra: In fact wouldn't it be more true to say that stream-entry and irreversibility are one and the same spiritual experience and...

S.: Well, it would depend on which particular context within which you saw them.

Padmavajra: 'v' - the arising of the Bodhicitta is something which....

S.: There's another point which one must remember - that there are different levels of the Bodhicitta. Just as you've got different levels of Going for Refuge. You could even apply that and say that the 'effective' or 'real' arising of the Bodhicitta corresponds to the irreversible Bodhisattva. You could work it out in that sort of way

appear to be the Buddha's original teaching. You don't find that cosmic perspective at all.

Subhuti: So how would you take all that? How would you take the cosmic perspective and the three Kalpas it takes to traverse the Bodhisattva Path? Is it just to, in a way, stretch your horizon?

S.: It's partly a way of stretching your imagination, also I think you are not to understand it as pertaining to any particular individual but as representing a cosmic trend. Do you see what I mean? Perhaps I should spell all this out in a proper book. Part of it is present in a very condensed form in that lecture on the Bodhisattva. So I personally see, one might say, I think I'm being true to original Buddhism here, I see that sort of cosmic Bodhisattva Ideal as not pertaining to any sort of given individual at all. I don't really see how an individual can actually form that kind of aspiration. Do you see what I mean? Because if people think that they can't it means they don't really realise the significance of the words that they're saying (Laughter) In some of the Mahayana sutras, the Bodhisattva is represented as saying that he is willing to go to hell for thousands of kalpas, if that will thereby help a single living being even a little bit. But can one really? (Laughter) Can one really actually be saying that? I would say it's quite impossible for any human being to say that! (and to sincerely believe it) If you think of what the pains of hell are really like, you can't even stand a tenth or a hundredth part of that pain for a minute. And here you are saying that you are willing and ready to undergo those sorts of pains for ages upon ages! How can you take that as actually as it were a workable ideal or aspiration for a real live human being? You find it difficult enough to give a hand with the wasing-up sometimes, to go back to that well worn example.

So when the Mahayana texts speak of the Bodhisattva in this way, if I can't make sense of it (I can only regard it as referring to a for want of a better term, "cosmic trend" - as recognising that the existence of the potentiality for Enlightenment, even under the most unfavourable circumstances.

Ratnaguna; Does that mean that I've misunderstood the Bodhisattva Ideal -- I've understood the individual Bodhisattva Ideal to have that sort of cosmic arena for the individual?

S; In a sense it does. To a limited extent it does - even for the ordinary individual. You can obviously think in terms of rebirth and you can think in terms of a series of rebirths, extending over a rather long period of time, or you can perhaps imagine yourself as continuing your spiritual life and progress. But can you really think in terms of a Bodhisattva career literally extending over three unthinkable kalpas which is an enormous period of time, and involving perhaps, from time to time, a sojourn of perhaps millions or billions of years in various hells for the sake of helping even one living being? Is that really credible?

Padmava~ra: And also the idea of practising the Dharma so that one day you can become someone in a world sphere somewhere who is ~oin~g to rediscover the Dharma? Is that out as well really?

S: I~would say~in prin~iple not, but this goes back to what we were saying the other day - you must be very careful not to lose yourself in dreams of that sort to such an extent that you become unable to practise the Dharma here and now. I think all that you really need is your general faith in the sort of conservation of let's

say, spiritual values beyond death and you can be sure that if you do

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really practise the dharma here and now, the future, how and where you'll be reborn and whether you do become a Buddha in some distant world system - all that will look after itself. I don't really think that one can realistically make it the object of an actual aspiration. That is saying that I don't take the Mahayana sutras literally. So I tend to regard the Mahayana sutras as giving a glimpse of a sort of a archetypal world which is inspiring in a general way and broadens our vision, but not as providing an actual pattern for Buddhist living, so to speak, in a detailed sense. I think our pattern for Buddhist living, in that sort of way, comes much more nearly from the early parts, say, of the Pali canon.

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Suvajra: Does this mean then that the significance~stream~entry and breaking the 'three fetters' is itself of great cosmic significance?

S.: Well, it's of cosmic significance in that its repercussions ~rri surely extend beyond the present life-time in respect of the individual breaking those fetters.

Suvajra: What I was thinking was that you correlated irreversibility with stream-entry as being one and the same spiritual experience?

S.: Yes, but I also said that there was a separate development of the~~Mahayana as an elaboration of irreversibility in a sense, you might say; historically speaking, on the~wrong basis; so when you equate the irreversibility of the Bodhisattva with stream-entry, you do not necessarily also equate all those independent, as it were, wrongly based developments, at the same time.

Suvajra: So it doesn't necessarily mean therefore, that breaking the three fetters, constitutes your being an irreversible Bodhisattva?

S.: You're still trying to compare one thing literally taken with another thing, literally taken. But in a sense, missing the point. Do you see what I mean?(inaudible)...No~,~ I say that they diverge~e. I ;~n't say~they are completely separate... There are certain developments which are incompatible, in as much as they were separate developments. Those you cannot reconcile. You just have to leave them aside, so to speak.

Padmavajra: At the risk of being a bore... in Tuscany, this last year, you definitely spoke of the Bodhicitta as the sort of altruistic aspect of stream-entry. Can I go on with that?

S.: Well, in a very broad sense it is. In the sense that it represents the Compassion aspect of that spiritual experience which is, as it were, left out from the Hinayanaists in their understanding of stream-entry. I use the term 'Bodhicitta' just to indicate that one cannot in fact, divorce stream-entry from that Compassion element as the Hinayana seems to think.

Ratnaprabha: I think I may be a little too literal minded, but if we do see the Bodhicitta as coming before irreversibility in the Bodhisattva, then that presumably means that the Bodhicitta will arise before stream-entry. So if one can think of stream-entry arising in this life-time, for example, one presumably is thinking that the Bodhicitta arises before that.

S.: That again is missing the point because it is only within that as it were, separately developed Mahayana version of the Path that the Bodhicitta arises before the Bodhisattva becomes irreversible. If you equate, so to speak, the Bodhicitta with stream-entry, you've

already nullified that distinction between the arising of the Bodhicitta and the attainment of a Bodhisattva's irreversibility.

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PadmaVaira: - So if you equate Bodhicitta and stream-entry, there's no point in trying to follow...

S.: To follow further the Mahayana's separate development. Yes, I think this really must be spelled out sometime. (Voices: Yes.) I mean, any of you could do it now. (Laughter) But in a connected way, if you see what I mean. It's a quite important point. (Vs: Yes)

Padmavajra: All the threads are there - well, most of them. - (tomorrow) thread - Well, nearly all of them. One - suppose I haven't made a connection with yet, is the Going Forth but that's pretty obvious. And another - I'll mention it now since I've never done so before and I might as well get it in here in case I don't get a chance - if I'm knocked down by a sort of thing - this occurred to me, it is quite interesting that . . . you've all heard of the Shin schools especially the Jodo Shin Shu - and they believe in the Path of the Other-Path, not the Path of Self-Path - you know that don't you. Zen follows the Path of Self-Path - the JodoShin Shu follows the Path of Other-Path. (Break in tape) ...spiritual practice though they don't call it a spiritual practice in the sense of anything implying the exercise of self-power - their principle spiritual practice is simply to recite 'Namo Buddha Amitabhaya nama' - yes? 'Salutation to Buddha Amitaya' and they do this not as a spiritual practice, in the self-path sense, but as simply as an expression of gratitude to Amitabha for having already accomplished their liberation by him 48 vows - that's all spelled out in the Survey anyway; you should know it quite well. So the point that occurs to me is: point 1. What does the Shin School have to say about the Going for Refuge? I've read a few books about Shin Shu and I've seen no reference to Going for

Refuge. Do they regard the Going for Refuge as pertaining to the Path of Self-Path? And for that reason have they dropped it? Or do they not regard it as pertaining to the Path of Self-Path and has perhaps - I'm only asking a question and trying to find out from ShinShu authorities - have they come to regard the mantra of Salutation to the Buddha Amitabha, as if as it were, equivalent to the Going for Refuge? Because upon reciting it, you are as it were, reborn in the Pure Land of Amitabha. You go there at the time of death. You're saved'.

Subhuti: You're saying that you recite the mantra as an expression of gratitude because your salvation is already accomplished? (S.: Yes) So in a sense, you don't need to Go for Refuge?

-S.: Well, yes, I suppose, you could look at it like that.

Subhuti: Wouldn't that be why it doesn't fit because that would imply that there is something that you can do?

S.: Ah, but then I asked a previous question, whether they do in fact regard the Going for Refuge as an expression of self-power. I'm hypothesizing because I don't know - they might say that 'no, you're not actually doing anything by virtue of self-power'. 'You Go for Refuge' to the Buddha out of thankfulness for him, either having gained Enlightenment or having gained it for you through the fulfillment of his vows'. Do you see what I mean? So I'm merely inquiring at this stage. I've not yet been able to find out, but I'm just wondering whether further correlations are possible. That's all. Well it is an interesting point anyway, isn't it?

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What do they make of the Going for Refuge? They can't ignore it because it is so basic and fundamental in traditional Buddhism. They ought to have said something about it but I don't know what that might be.

_____ For the sake of completion Bhante, can you tell us where the Going Forth fits in?

S.: It is clear that for some people, Going Forth coincided with stream-entry and opening of the Dharma-eye, but it doesn't obviously do that for everybody. Also it's a question of what does one mean by Going Forth? Because it can be Going Forth in the literal sense; it can be Going Forth, as it were, in a metaphorical sense.

Anyway, you can see what I've been trying to do in a general sort of way, because if one takes any of these teachings seriously, one can't help relating them to one's own experience. So that is the meeting point - within one's experience.

Ratnaprabha: Can I go back to my original question and carry on being quite literalistic - and think again of the possibilities of, as it were, different kinds of Enlightenment. What I'm thinking of - I think you have possibly said in the past that Enlightened people who you know of, clearly do have different temperaments. Perhaps some of them are, as it were, 'better' at putting across their experience to unenlightened people than to others. In other words better at helping others in their spiritual progress and so on and if one extended this idea, one might

imagine that to become a Buddha - that is somebody who gained Enlightenment for the first time in the (new world) sphere, would require a very long Path of perfecting all one's personal qualities until one was ideally suited for transmitting the Dharma. However, gaining Enlightenment as the disciple of such a Buddha, could, unless I am being too literalistic, possibly not require such a long Path of perfecting all one's qualities for the sake of transmitting the Dharma well. Do you see what I mean?

S: There's two opinions about that within the Mahayana itself, as I think discussed by Tsong-kha-pa - one is, admitting what you say to be correct - the Enlightenment experience which one ends up with is nonetheless the same. The other view of course, is that by accumulating, as it were, the exterior equipment of the Arahant, the spiritual experience with which you end up is in fact a different experience - at least an inferior experience. But I would say, personally, that it all hinges on this question of Compassion. Because usually the Arahant ideal is considered to exclude the ideal of Compassion - and personally I cannot imagine Enlightenment in the true sense, in a sense-regardless of level as being Enlightenment, without the inclusion of what we speak of as Compassion. If you regard the Arahant as having, say, a limited degree of Compassion, even as he has a limited degree of Wisdom, well that's alright. But then Arahantship would merely be a lower stage on that same one path of full Enlightenment - being the Enlightenment of a Buddha and not a separate diverging path.

Ratnaprabha; So even if the spiritual experiences are the same of the two kinds of temperamentally different people - is there still the possibility of making some kind of a choice?

S: I wouldn't say that you could reduce the presence or absence of Compassion to just a matter of temperament. This is I think

what it amounts to. (Pause)

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In other words I'm saying that any kind of insight or Enlightenment experience per se, involves the presence of Compassion which goes direct against Theravada teaching, at least Adhidharma teaching.

Subhuti: The next question is from Tejananda on the Bodhisattva vow.

-tejananda: It would presumably be unfitting to take the Bodhisattva vow, including the four-fold vow that you mentioned in the talk, until after the arising of the Bodhicitta - So how then are we to regard the fact that the vow is "take first 4 in inverted commas - in the context of various visualisation Sadhnas that would (move to it) . --

S.: Well, the visualization exercises themselves are preceded by the arising of the Bodhicitta, yes? (Laughter) And in some of the Sadhanas there is actually a verse for that. But that is why mentioned - a little while ago, that just as there is a provisional Going for Refuge and an Effective and a Real Going for Refuge, there is in the same way, a sort of - well one could say - Provisional arising of the Bodhicitta. You can think in terms of well, "may I gain Enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings". You can think that quite genuinely and feel that quite genuinely but nonetheless, even within the context of the Mahayana - that is the separate Mahayana Path - the Bodhicitta will not necessarily have arisen. But it's only when you have a genuine sort of Enlightenment experience or Insight experience, at that point, that your subsequent practice of visualization does become a genuine Vajrayana practice. It's the same also for the experience of Sunyata - when you say:

(QUOTE IN SANSKRIT)

- So to the extent that a visualization is a Vajrayana Practice, it is preceded by the practice that is to say the actual experience - of both Mahayana and Hinayana. (Break in tape). Alright, first of all you Go for Refuge, then you practise the four Brahmaviharas, then you develop the Bodhicitta, and then of course, you have the experience of Sunyata and then you do your visualization. But that clearly you will do them all to begin with, as it were, provisionally and gradually each would become a more and more real experience. (Pause)

- ~oi'nt of jiew Tejananda: So~fr6m ouT- / even be~fore the Bodhicitta has arisen, we can genuinely as you say, make the aspiration to, as it were, eventually take the Bodhisattva vow?

S.: Well, it's an aspiration within this more concentrated context, I referred to, - it's basically an aspiration to enter the stream. It represents, a sort of - thinking in terms of entering the stream, in terms of Compassion. Because we must remember that that experience - once - whatever it is, let's call it 'X' for the moment - can be looked at from all sorts of points of view. It can be looked at in terms of fetters broken; it can be looked at, so to speak, in terms of irreversibility - that is to say, getting out of the range of influence of the gravitational pull of the conditioned and entering - ~4~eS~he~e of the gravitational pull of the Unconditioned. Or one can look at it in terms of experiencing Compassion or Going Forth from existing conditions or of a certain penetration of Insight and seeing of the Truth. One can think of that basic experience in all sorts of ways. And stream-entry is only one of them. Going for Refuge in the real sense is another one.

HEM (M) 10/16

Te~amitra: This is a question on the cosmic Perspective which introduced in the lecture: Is the cosmic perspective the imaginative' working out of a principle or is it based on Insight?

S.: I don't see that one needs to separate the two things. Because I've spoken of the imagination in terms of Insight and Insight in terms of imagination. I suspect Sagaramatfs (Tejamitra speaking for Sagaramati) using 'imagination' more in the ordinary

sense - imag- inativ'~e working out. I would regard 'imaginative working out' - using the word in a more deeper sense - as equivalent to Insight. So it represents in a sense, not just a working out in a fanciful sort of a way, but actually a seeing of what is actually there, in a richer and a more colourful sort of a way and not just a bare abstract conceptual~way. So I really wouldn't distinguish between the two. I'd rather not distinguish. For instance, if you think of, say, Nirvana in terms @f 'Sukhav- ati' , you're not just fancifully elaborating a concept but you're seeing of Sukhavati represents a sort of glimpse of the inherent richness of the state of Nirvana. It represents the realization of the fact that it isn't something cold and bare but it is some- thing rich and colourful and vital and alive and all the rest of it. So imagination gives you as much of a clue to the real nature of Nirvana as; Insight does - Insight, as it were, in the more ab- stract ~conceptual sense. Due to Insight, you would say, 'it is infinite, it is absolute, it is incomparable, it is pure being or beyond being and non-being'. This is the language of Insight. But that it¼is full of light and colour and beautiful jewel trees, and beautiful beings and all that sort of thing - well, that --as the language of imagination. They are both equally valid. And imagination is as much a key to the nature of Reality, to use that language, as Ins~~ht itself is. I don't see that the language of in's"tgh4 ,conceptual language, has any inherent superiority over the more colourful language Of imagination. Neither must be taken, as it were, literally. It would be good if one could combine both lang- ttages. (Pause)

Subhuti: Abhaya has got some questiornon world-systems.

Abhaya: None of us in our group, Bhante, was clear about the precise difference between the terms cosmos, universe, world-system1 galactic system etc. Could you explain? That's the first part of the question.

S.: Usually when we speak of world-systems within the traditional Bu~dhist context one means not the world-s~stem in the modern sense, but a complete system of a Mt. Meru complete with its four (Dvepas~) and all the different levels of gods and so on. And of course, there are many thousands of these scattered through a particular area and these make up one bigger unit and then there are many thousands or millions of these bigger units, also scattered through space and so on, with different terms for all of them. As far as I remember a--' Buddha's range extends over 3,000 million of these as far as I remember. You can look up the details in McGovern's 'Buddhist Cosmology' probably? There's another new book I've got on Buddhist Cosmology - you could look it up probably in th~t. I think it's by Katz . I think it's by Katz but the title is 'Buddhist Cosmology.' That may not be the name of the author - I might have got it mixed up with another new' bQok I've got. We don't have proper terms in English. That is why I some- times say 'cosmos1, 'universe', '3,000, (great) thousand fold system' and so on. One can of course, (fit it in) with modern cosmology but you usually have to sacrifice or explain away the

four con~inents or the sub-continents and all the r~st of it.

HEM (M) 10/17

Abhaya: What is the word for the biggest envisageable unit?

S.: Oh, I don't remember - but that would be a very long word indeed! (Laughter) But there is~(Sahasvalokadhātu?) - that is thousand-fold world system. (Pause) Because in Mahayana sutras, they've got numbers which actually mean infinity so they've sometimes got ten million infinities or ten million infinities of infinities. It's not easy to translate~into modern terms. ~ (Laughter)

Abhaya: The second part: What is the correlation cosmically speaking, between the plains of existence described in Buddhist scriptures and--in the Wheel of Life under physical universe?

S.: Well, the physical universe only corresponds to the world of animals and the world of human beings. The others are, as it were, subtle realms, not covered by science at all - not usually recogniz~d by conventional science. Some scientists are open-minded about the Pretaloka but they don't usually go beyond that - there may be some- thing or other surviving bodily death in a spook-like sort of way. Some scientists have believed in 'spiritualism' but they doesn't really carry them much beyond the Pretaloka, does it? So modern physical science just recognizes, for all intents and purposes those two realms - the animal realm and the human realm. It doesn't recognize subtler realms below or subtler realms above. Scientists actually used to deny the existence of any other realm. I'm not sure that they're as confident as that, all of them, any longer. But certainly official science doesn't include any survey of what we would refer to as 'higher worlds'. (pause) Buddhism doesn't regard these worlds as unreal or imaginary in the sense of fanciful, but only as not being perceptible by the phys- ical senses. Scientists used to think that if you can't perceive it with the five physical senses, or some artificial extension thereof, well, then it doesn't really exist. That point of view has come to be increasingly regarded as itself, rather unscientific.

Padmavajra: Going back a bit ~ when in a Mahayana sutra you have -the Buddha setting forth a way into different world systems and so on, is one to try and imagine the scene as taking place in the traditional way, with the idea of a world system

S.: I think you should try to interpret it exactly as described in the Mahayana sutra. You see what I mean? You can work out the mean- ing and indications, sort of, later.

Padmavajra: I wonder if there was a sort of context which the In~ian Buddhist view of a world system, had~which one needs to get....? When I imagine a ray going into a universe, I imagine space like when I walk out the door at night and ...

S.: I think there's no other way in which one can think of it. if you described a ray as traversing, well, what does it traverse? Well, space, in some sense or other. It may not be space in the sense that we experience the ultimate space, but even if it isn't space, inasmuch as a ray is described as traversing it, we cannot but think of it as space. So therefore, (Laughs) to begin with, just imagine things as exactly described in the Mahayana sutras, if you actually can. It does actually seem, there is a quite coherent underlying general system. I think~ thi~s emerges from Lamdte~s~~a~flflotat&dns to his translation of the Vimalakirtinirdesa. It is quite surprising in a way, the extent, to which at least, references to other worlds, in this and a few connected sutras, do actually interconnect and correspond on quite a vast scale. So that perhaps wot~ld perhaps give one some sort of more general background. There is an English translation of his French

translation which we do have. (End of Tape 10)

HEM (M) 11/1

Suva~ra: Which in your opinion is the best translation of the White Lotus Sutra, taking into consideration the spirit of the sutra~

S.: Yes, I think it's very important to read it for~spirit. I still think%Soothill's is best-from that point of view. Though in that new edition of the complete version, they've mangled a few things, I - looking at the actual Sanskrit text in a few places, where I wanted to quote a passage. But yes, on the whole, T would say, that is really very good.

Suvajra: Not the Japanese version of Soothill's one.

S.: Well that is the only one that is available now, I'm afraid. I think Soothill's own unedited version (of the Sutra) was never available in full. I did have a copy of the original edition but I'm afraid it disappeared from the Order library when it was down at Aryatara some years ago. But I have seen a later reprint, but I haven't been able to get hold of a copy - not to buy. But that is not complete. He translated it in its completeness, but in that particular volume, only lengthy excerpts are included with connecting commentary. But the Japanese edition is (Soothill's) as revised by two scholars - one Japanese and one Western, a Western Jesuit - just here and there they actually spoil his translation, even with respect of meaning, and when compares it with the Sanskrit text. But nonetheless it is a very inspiring translation even & edited by them. But for a very literal and sometimes misleading translation from the Sanskrit -because after all we need to go back to the Sanskrit, one has to consult (Kern?) and of course there is a more recent one written by (Herwitz) from the Chinese. One can also consult that. So I would say if you just want to read it straight through for inspiration, read the edited (Soothill) version in that Japanese edition but for more serious study also consult those other two versions at the same time,

Subhuti: Conze started on a translation of the White Lotus Sutra?

S.: He did. He only translated the first two chapters, or sections. I repeatedly tackled him about this but he refused to embark on a translation because he didn't have access to certain Sanskrit manuscripts which are actually in Moscow, I believe. Anyway, somewhere in Russia. And he believed that that was indispensable to the truly scholarly edition and translation. I'm not sure if it's really so or if he just didn't feel like doing any more work. (Laughter)

Buddha alita: Could you say more about Ksitigarbha? You mentioned in the lecture that very little is said

S.: I can't really say more than I've said in the Three Jewels. That's about the extent of our knowledge so far as sources in English are concerned. There is a Ksitigarbha Sutra which seems to be a Chinese compilation and not actually a translation from the Indian original. There's a translation of that in the Order library. It's not really very helpful. It's mainly concerned with enumeration and description of rather --nasty hells. It doesn't really

add anything to the conception of Ksiti-garbha himself. I think he's iconographically very interesting. I think it wouldn't be a bad idea to look up as many pictures of him as one can in Far Eastern Buddhist art. He's usually represented in two forms: The most familiar form is of the monk - the Sarvastavadan monk - with a shaven head and with the (Kathanga?) the Monastic staff, and sort of flowing robes. And then there's another form - a rather odd form - it's cross-legged in a sort of meditative posture with - I think it's a sort of fruit of some kind - it might even be a jewel. It might be a jewel. According to the literary texts, it should be a jewel, but it

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but it looks more like a fruit sometimes and an almost Padmasambha-like headdress. I've got a Chinese image in my room, you might have seen it. I've also got some reproductions of Chinese paintings of the other Ksitigarbha. - In fact, I think I've got a couple of spare ones - anyone particularly wants one, I can probably find one for them. They're printed in Hong Kong or.... But this is an impressive sort of figure. Sometimes, I think by contemplating the actual representation in art, one gets a better feeling for what the figure represents or what that Bodhisattva represents, than simply by reading the descriptions or accounts. (Pause) His name is often translated as Earth Store Bodhisattva - Ksitigarbha.

Susiddhi: You said it's unreal for a human being to declare something like: "I will save all beings!", But could a human being sort of declare himself for the training for Enlightenment for all beings?

S.: This is in fact, what I have said, on occasion, that if you think in those more cosmic terms - and here I'm really paraphrasing, or even reinterpreting - you can think in terms of a cosmic Bodhicitta which is at work trying to save all beings and can, as it were, make yourself open to that manifesting through you - rather than thinking of that as your Bodhicitta or something that you are going to do. Do you see the difference? I think that is more realistic, or more true. So if you have this conception of their being at work in the universe, something - I don't really know what to call it - Bodhicitta, one might say - that is, as it were, having the effect of leading beings to a higher level of existence - one can not only see that as at work in the universe, but aspire that that may express itself through you. So that you, as it were, may become a sort of fellow worker with it. And that you may help fulfill the purpose of that Bodhicitta in the world or in the universe. Because it is imaginative and poetic, I don't think that one can state it in a doctrinally concise or precise or even, perhaps acceptable form. So one mustn't sort of press it in a literal sort of way. I think this is in effect, what the Mahayana sutras are doing - they are presenting this sort of a picture - I don't think that Qne, in a sense, is intended to take it literally or as representing something that one as a limited individual, is to think of oneself as attempting to do. But you can certainly assist in the process or make yourself a means of expression of that cosmic Bodhicitta. I wouldn't like to say anything about the ontological status of that cosmic Bodhicitta - that is another matter entirely.

Susiddhi: In practical terms, then, if one was convinced that our movement, say the

Sangha, the spiritual community, the WBO, was set up in such a way that it could only augment the trend, then committing oneself to that, - which could be done provisionally or on an effective or real basis, would be the practical thing to do.

S.: Yes, indeed, yes!! I've sometimes spoken in those sort of terms. I've spoken, admittedly very-loosely, as it were, poetically, in terms of the Bodhicitta manifesting itself within the spiritual community as a whole - as not being anybody's personal possession. Because to think of the Bodhicitta as our Bodhicitta, is really a contradiction in terms. On the other hand, it is not something collective. We really have no word; for that, just as we have no word for a member of a spiritual community. Because a member of a spiritual community does not belong to the spiritual community in the way that a member of a group belongs to a group. They are quite different kinds of experiences - quite different kinds of phenomena. So with the Bodhicitta. It's not my Bodhicitta, it's not your Bodhicitta - you could say it's ours. That gets nearer because it is yours and it is not yours. It's mine - it is not mine. It is yours and it is mine. It is neither yours nor mine.

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Padmavajra: Can you call it trans-individual~

S.: Yes, you could call it that, except that perhaps that sets it up as too much separate from the individual. It's beyond the individual. Whereas it's in a sense also manifesting through the individual.

Padmavajra: In your booklet on the Bodhisattva, you mentioned the Russian word 'sobornost' - if that comes close to it - how would you - Is that through your reading of Russian spirituality?

S.: Yes. Because this is of course a term in Russian Orthodox Christianity. It's one of their most important terms. There is no corresponding English word at all. It's a sort of 'togetherness' - it's also translated as 'conciliarity' - but it isn't togetherness in a group sense. As explained by them, - it's quite clear they don't mean a group togetherness. They mean some kind of spiritual unity or unity through common adherence to, or common experience of, a particular spiritual principle. They believe that it should be that which holds the Church together. They're quite opposed to what they sometimes call 'Caesaro-Papism'. They're quite opposed to the Church being held together by a hierarchical ecclesiastical structure with a Pope at the head of it like a King. They believe that this is quite against the spirit of Christianity. They believe in a sort of communion of all believers - all believers together form a sort of solidarity, one could say. They express that quality by 'sobornost'. It is not the merging of the individual in the group, but it's more like a free association of individuals imbued with a common spirit. It's quite interesting that they've come quite close to that conception.

Abhaya: Probably what the Roman Catholics would call the 'Mystical Body of Christ'.

S.: One could say that, yes, except that in the Eastern Church, they believe that that must find

expression in actual sort of church structure. Whereas the Pope in Catholicism is very much like a head - well, he represents Christ. He's the Vicar of Christ. So some modern writers on the Russian Church believe that they follow what we would call a Middle Path between modern individualism on the one hand, and sort of hierarchical subordination on the other. They believe that they sort of found a middle way which represents the true teaching of Christ. (Pause) Of course, in practice, the actual Russian Church strayed away from this principle, not when they had a Patriarch, but when the Patriarch was suspended and the Czar became the head of the Church, and delegated his responsibilities to a layman, who ran the whole church in a highly authoritarian, semi-military sort of a fashion. Because in recent times the Patriarchate was revived, but of course, the Patriarchate is not very free. He is in a very difficult position. Anyway, some points have become clearer? I hope. Here, if one had more time one could produce papers on certain issues, just for experiencing and expressing them to make quite sure that you have in fact got it all right. No doubt something will percolate into different study groups. Just being aware of these questions means that the FWBO is in the vanguard of Buddhism in the West. Because as far as I'm aware, few other groups don't even consider these things. Hardly, I don't think dream them. They are much more concerned with relating Buddhism, such of it as they understand, with Marxism or Existentialism or Psychoanalysis than with sorting out the Dharma itself and making sure that they really have understood that in basically a unified, integrated, harmonious sort of way, and are really doing justice to that. Their attempts -- perhaps to compare Buddhism with other systems are in my opinion premature.

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Subhuti: I remember one summer school-the Buddhist Society summer school I went to, where they were very proud of debating the Arahant and the Bodhisattva. An ideal but without any sort of understanding of the historical background and any relationship to real spiritual experience.

S.: Quite an unreal sort of debate.

Subhuti: Like a game of debate.

S.: Yes. This is what one often feels. perhaps the sooner more Ordermembers can start writing more books, the better.. Because I'm certainly not going to be able to write more myself.

Vairocana: When is this new book coming out?

S. I really don't know but I hope it will come out this year, hopefully by September. I can't be sure at the moment, but it will be a useful book when it comes out, after 25 years practically. So when I talk about being behind with my work, I really mean that a quarter of a

century behind with my work!.(laughter) So it's not surprising that I get a bit frustrated!
(la~ghter)

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S: I do know that the Penguin translations of various Nietzsche's works are usually to be seen~on sale in FWBO bookshops. Is that the case in Croydon for instance?

Padmavajra: I don't think we've got any Nietzsche. I have noticed them in t~e LBC.

S: Yes the LBC I believe have always had them. Since the Archway days we've had them.

Subhiuti: I think he's not as popular as he used to be.

S: It's all the ~loomsbury-ites! Elbowing Nietzsche aside (Laughter)

Padnavajra: No, it's Shelley and Keats and all the romantics

Susiddhi; I heard one person give a talk in Glasgow 6n 'Nietzsche and the~tre~evaluation of values'. I think that was in '79.

Subhuti: Sagaramati was very keen on Nietzsche.

Suvaj;ra; And L~vah too. ~e led a few study groups on Nietzsche.

S; I was at one time going to do a study group on Schopenhauer as ~u~cator.

S: Perhaps I'll leave it to someone else now.

Vairocana: I never really noticed him being popular around the LBC.

S; So wM-t is popular currently? I'ai a little bit out of touch Wut currently what are people reading about apart from the way of all women and things li~e~ that? (iiaughter)

_____ Men~and ~riendship~

S; Men and Friendship is being read?

Susiddhi Bi~ographies of Keats and Shelley..

Abha~a; Novels of Willam Gerhardie. That's through the influence

of M~c al Holroyd..

VadmaYa;ira: George (Stein~ Bluebeard's Castle - metaphysicals. _____: Milton.

S: Johnson?

Subhuti: I think Johnson has had a vogue.

Padmavajra: He hasn't come in yet. We haven't started with Johnson.

Subhuti: A lot of people have read Boswell's life.

S: There is that new biography that has come out I think in Penguin. It's really just a straightforward resume of the best bits of Boswell but It'S very readable and it's well done. I think it's called the~i.~e bf Samuel ~ohnson~ We should get that for our booksho^{1/4}ps ("Personal Wistory of Samuel Johnson").

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Padmavajra: Jackson Bates' biography is highly recommended.

S: Someone mentioned in a letter to me - it was Dhirananda - i~ mentioned that he had just read Boswell's life of Johnson and one of the things that struck him was what a genuinely masculine character Johnson was and I found that quite interesting and then I started thinking about that and I thought well yes he did have that genuinely masculine sort of character. At the same time he did have very strong and warm emotions. He had a very strong sense of friendship and of course we~hay~ studied those tw9 poe~s~of hisdealing withthat particul&r subject.

Padmavajra: Quite a few people are reading Johnson at the moment. It might be because of his anniversary.

Padmavajra; Jung I think is making a bit of a comeback in some circles.

S: We don't seem to have yet been able to get our hands on any copies of Ballbreaking.

Padmavajra; We've ordered five hundred from Australia. We'll distributte them throughout the movement.

'~h~at'sood - S:'Ihopeour enterprise is rewarded. (Laughter~ It should bring about a permanent change in the movement. (Laughter)

Padmavajra; It'll be very interesting. I know it's a different sort of book but Men and Friendship in Croydon was our biggest single seller and maybe Ballbreaking.

S: I think quite a few women have been quite interested in - several women have commented to me that they've found the book a bit of an eye opener because they hadn't realised what difficulties men had in being friends with each other, so they felt quite sympathetic. I

suppose a lot of women took it for granted that men just went around hugging one another just like women did. It's not so easy as that is it! Anyway let's pass on.

Subhuti; Tej amitra.

Tejamitra; This afternoon we had a discussion on the actual format of the course and I thought it would be quite useful if you could give us a sort of more helpful definition of what a micchaditthi actually is, as this is what we'll be dealing with to quite an extent in the Thitra study course.

S: A micchaditthi is a wrong view.

Tejamitra; If I could perhaps add to that. One thing that I've experienced is that you can sort of identify a micchaditthi and you can rationally explain the wrong view but you still find that the person is in some ways not sort of changed by the rational expression.

S: I think it's really a much wider question than of identifying wrong views because there's that well known couplet, a man convinced against his will remains of the same opinion still - it's the will that you've got to change and that is not so

easily done. It takes a much longer time. I think you should be

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very careful not in the course of conversation to suddenly pounce on someone and say Ah that's a micchaditthi. I think there's been a little bit of that sort of thing on the part of enthusiastic micchaditthi hunters. (Laughter) It's alright in a way but the micchaditthi keeps coming back. You haven't completely succeeded in extricating it. I think what is more important is that one should strive for clarity of thinking. One might even forget about micchaditthis as such for the time being but just encourage clarity of thinking in oneself and in others. If one does that well micchaditthis will be dissolved or won't even have a chance, any way. I believe Subhuti's held already one weekend study course for - was it actually logic ?

Subhuti; ' Knowledge in Buddhism as the centre of the universe

S: I think we need to do more things of that sort. Encourage people to be clear in their thinking and to be more aware of their own mental Processes and be aware of when they aren't being logical. For instance some time ago I gave quite a lot of attention to the fact that some people seemed to think that the fact that they felt very strongly that a certain thing was so, meant that it was in fact objectively so. Many at first found it quite difficult, not to say impossible to see the distinction between those two things. 'But I feel it's like that, and then from saying I feel it's like that they very quickly pass to well 'I know that that's true'. They don't really mean that they know. they mean that they've a strong subjective feeling and that is no demonstration of the actual existence of the thing that they feel is there at all. So clarity

of thought in this particular area is necessary so that you can distinguish between your own strong feeling and a situation which is actually factually so. Recently I got a quite prize example of muddled thinking. I'm sorry to say it was the first issue of the peace movement sort of newsletter. They call it 'down by the riverside' or something. I'm afraid it reads right back fifteen or twenty years. It reminded me of the old International Times and stuff like that. Badly produced and really sort of shoddy in its thinking and using a very crude sort of left wing jargon. It was really bad and a great rag bag in which all sorts of people, sort of fellow travellers of the Buddhist peace movement just sort of let their hair down a bit. The next issue is going to be a women's issue so you can guess the sort of tendency already.

Subhuti; It was rather revealing on the cover. It had the caption. 'Thinking like a mountain' which is precisely what they did.

S: Thinking like a molehill. (Laughter) That was really really bad and I couldn't help thinking well if the peace movement depends on that sort of thing it's got no chance, no chance at all. And also if that's what the British Buddhist peace movement is all about well the less we have to do with it the better. We just don't want anything to do with that sort of thing. I've been very very disappointed, even in a sense annoyed. Under the auspices of Buddhism there is this sort of sloppy thinking! It's self indulgent, it's incredibly self indulgent.

Sudhana; Where does the faculty of intuition come into this scheme of things~

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S: I don't think there's any term in Buddhism corresponding to intuition. There's insight which is of a higher nature but Buddhism doesn't seem to recognise this wonderful and mysterious intuition. I think technically in philosophy intuition is used to indicate knowledge which is not demonstrative. For instance if you say two and two equals four well it's immediately obvious. You don't have to reason it out. As soon as it is stated you see that two and two is four, it must be four. That kind of knowledge is intuitive. It doesn't have to go through any logical process. It's immediate. And sense perception is intuitive in that sense. It's immediate. I think Kant speaks of intuitions of sense doesn't he.

Abhaya; So it's the exact opposite to what the current understanding of the term is. You usually think of intuition as something which is not demonstrable but you sort of feel. That's its association. S: Some sort of higher knowledge. I think strictly it is something which is non demonstrative in the sense that something that is immediately evident without the necessity of going through any logical process.

Subhuti; Jung uses the term doesn't he - a judgement which is arrived at without a rational process.

S: Ah. You could say there are judgements which jump or try to evade the rational process

but that is rather a different thing and I think there can be confusion here on this score. You can say that my intuition tells me that two and two are four but if you say well my intuition tells me that he's plotting against me, that is not the same kind of statement. Sometimes you do develop a sort of sense based on L~::~~ previous experience. You've had certain experiences so many times and because of that you know how they usually end up. So when you see a certain pattern yet again repeating itself you can sort of jump ahead to the end and know what is going to happen even from a very slight indication you know. So this is based on experience and this is sometimes referred to as intuition. It's here that you sort of jump the logical process because you've been through it all before so many times. Of course you can be mistaken because this time halfway through the pattern may veer, it may change. ~t' s~

Chakkhupala; When it's said that the Buddha knows the ways of all men is it that just he has a very long previous experience of psychological tendencies.

S: When you say ways of all men.

Chakkhupala; I mean in particular where he's prophesying their enlightenment.

S: No. I've always understood it to mean that he had a direct perception in as much as he had attained a state which was beyond time and could as it were foresee from our point of view or in our manner of speaking from a sort of vantage point outside time to which all times were equally present. No doubt the Buddha did have human experience of life in the ordinary way but I think when he made remarks or observation~ on people's past or future destinies those things were as it were

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directly present to him and presented to his supernormal, supratemporal faculty that he had, or at least that's how I've-- always understood it.

It seems to me that the Buddha speaks of his divyacakṣu - divine eye. The eye of course does immediately intuit its object. It sees it. In the same way when the Buddha with his divi~~ eye sees beings arising in accordance with their deeds and passing away in accordance with their deeds it's not something he sort of works out thinking ah they've done such and such therefore I suppose such and such is going to be their fate. No he sees it directly with that divine eye. So it is a species of intuition you might say. But it's intuitive knowledge not deductive knowledge based on first principles or inductive knowledge based on experience.

Saddhaloka; Can't one speak of faith as three elements of intuition, reason and experience. How would one speak about the intuitive element there?

S: I usually speak of faith either in emotional terms as the counterpart of wisdom or as indicating the trend or tendency of one's whole being. In a sense one's total will. Obviously you can't altogether separate the different faculties so even in faith there is a cognitive

element because you're at least vaguely aware of the object of faith. In a sense you've some knowledge of it so the cognitive element is there and you're making movement towards it, therefore the volitional element is there. But I think we generally use the term faith as a counterpart of wisdom. It is the emotional element or factor which is predominant.

Ratnaprabha; I think what Saddhaloka's referring to is the basis of faith, not an aspect of the faith itself but faith being based in a resonance with reality or something. Faith being based in reason and faith being based in experience. Three categories.

S: Well as I said you can't altogether separate the various faculties. They are as it were contained in one another and in the case of faith but in each of them one will predominate and in the case of faith it is the emotional element which is considered to predominate. That is to say positive emotion as directed towards something which is experienced or perceived or understood as superior to oneself.

Subhuti; That's it.?

Tejananda; This was in relation to the conclusion of the entire series. In this you mentioned that you hoped to develop a practical course following on from that course called the dynamics of the higher evolution. Presumably this ~~~ever actually happened as such but what it made me wonder was whether it might still be a practical idea from the point of view of bringing a wider range of people in contact with the Movement. To develop such a so to speak, non Buddhist approach to the development using our existing techniques such as meditation communication exercises and so on in conjunction with ideas like the higher evolution. It seems that Vajradhatu movement in the USA are coinciding something along these lines with some success called Shambala training and perhaps it would be possible for a course along these kind of lines.

S: I've looked at this book on Shambala and I don't think

That's anything like that. I did say the other day that I

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thought perhaps our Tuscany course had actually been the fulfillment of that particular idea though of course as I mention it and you do speak of it it's in non Buddhist terms. I think that would be very difficult actually because for instance what about your study groups, what about living in a community because here surely living in a spiritual community is now quite an integral part of the spiritual life. Could you translate it all into as it were neutral non Buddhist terms? We could have communication exercises without bringing Buddhism in but could you have say a non Buddhist puja, a non Buddhist study group, non Buddhist community, and so on. I think actually it sort of breaks down in practice. It's in a sense a good idea in theory. That's not to say that there can't be all sorts of sort of cultural and even psychological and philosophical bridges that one can build that people can cross over into the movement but I think once they have made that transition across that bridge we've no

alternative but~to offer them in the best way that we can the whole Buddhist works as it were. I think probably things like the Arts Centre are a better way of doing this kind of thing. Otherwise we get perilously near the weekend enlightenment intensive. Do you see what I mean? (Laughter)

Vairocana; The approach we've got right now is actually OK isn't it. I remember Kulamitra took a course in evolution - I don't exactly know how he did it but I think the first day he sort of left Buddhism out a bit and on the second day he sort of hit them with it. You draw in some people who ~e maybe not too interested in Buddhism but are interested finding out and then as soon as you've got them in (Laughter)

S: You have to be careful not to spring it on th~m too 7uddenly. Make them see that there's a real connction.

Vairocana; I think you're doing it quite well.

S: Good. ThQ~~9 no reason why we shouldn't experiment ~daffse I think w'~ had a peace and non violence weekend at the LBC.it went off quite well. And you had your clear - thinking seminar.

Tejananda; I wasn't thinking so much of something which was ultimately non Buddhist all along but just something which was an initial introduction and could give pe9ple a sort of experience of communication exercises, meditation and then you could lead them to the movement as a whole.

S: Well one can try but you have to be careful you don't attract people who are definitely sort of not only non religious but anti religious and might even be quite offended that actually all that was no more than a front for a religious organisation. They might feel that you hadn't been quite straightforward.

Subhuti; There is this school of economic science. They've been attracting enormous numbers. They had seventy or eighty in Norwich quite recently.

_____ They're hindus aren't they?

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S: No they're connected with the Gurdjieff-Ouspensky movement. I've seen that sort of~publicity and they seem at the moment to have a special connection at least in East Anglia with Advita Vedanta - they mention that specifically.

Subhuti; I think that is their background actually.

S: Yes and no. There's a great history to this because the Wurdjjeff-Ouspensky movement was originally a very one-sidedly intellectual movement. Very very much so but after Ouspensky's death I think some people became aware of this one-sidedness but they~ tried to sort of add something as it were from the outside so there ~as a group or move among them to team up with Pak Subud and his movement . So for some time the two things at least as regards some followers of Gurdjieff-Ouspensky were going in harness together. That resulted in various splits and then it didn't altogether work out - this link up with Pak Subud~ Then they took up with the Maharishi and some of them for some time functioned with him. It seems now that - some are looking to the Advaita Vedanta tradition of hinduism for that sort of more practical side of things. This is what I guess. But that seems to be a pattern ~ theirs. They've got this very elaborate theoretical system but they feel the need of something else in addition and they try to add it on in a quite extraneous sort of way and sometimes they get organisational 'difficulties because the Maharishi was very keen on using them as it were, to take people from them and incorporate them completely into his movement. They of course were trying to do the same thing with him. There were people who had been trained up by Maharishi and his Transcendental Meditation and who sort of ~ere teaching that under the auspices of the Gurdjieff Ouspensky movement and then I believe they broke off with the Maharishi and then he disowned them, he denounced their method of teaching. There were a lot of complications like that. But if they have attracted a lot of people that is quite interesting but they don't seem to carry them very far.

Ratnaprabha; They have a sort of a progressive system don't they where they get you going along for a year or so - I think a year and then they introduce you to the esoterics of it.

S: That is they introduce you to this more sort of practical aspect that they've sort of linked up with. I think this is what it usually is. Well it isn't just a more intensive study of the more abstruse works of Ouspensky or (Bennett) or so on.

Subhuti; I gather they do a sort of rundown of western Philosophy in a somewhat idiosyncratic manner.

S: Yes and - ditto for economics. Some people I know have been along to these lectures and were very very disappointed not to say disgusted and say that they're on a very very low level. Perhaps they do meet a need of some people. So this is what I've been saying quite often, that down in London especially the LBC needs to organise series of public lectures because I think there are people who do go along to lectures. I think we're quite deficient in that

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respect. I think people just mustn't rely upon me. I'm not giving many public lectures these

days. Because we've got very good speakers now in the movement and the LBC could easily organise a series of lectures well publicised with a sort of general common theme running through them in some public hall in central London. We should be doing this regularly. But going back to the micchaditthis, I have suggested to Subhuti that he writes an article dealing with all the difficulties that people have had, reviewers have had with his book but it also occurred to me you could even take a weekend study course on this particular area. Going through all these particular passages in your book which have given trouble, just reading and studying, and then reading out passages from all the different reviews and explaining exactly how the reviewer had gone wrong. Because people are going to meet these sort of questions and objections. So I think it's perhaps a quite useful thing you could do. I think a weekend would be sufficient. You might even unearth further micchaditthis!

Subhuti; Hopefully not in my own work.

Abhaya; You could do a weekend in Norwich.

S: Anyway is that it? We've covered quite a bit of ground over the course of the week. So do people feel a little bit better equipped or just more confused?

Voices : Much more equipped.

Tejamitra; I think that if a lot of the points that we've covered in the questions and answers don't come up all of this has actually provided us with a lot of good background generally.

S: You may even anticipate certain questions and difficulties. I must say I've not given concentrated attention to this series of lectures for many many years. I think I'm on the whole more satisfied with it than I thought I would be although, yes, there is a certain amount of updating to do here and there especially in the earlier lectures but I think that can be done quite easily. It doesn't affect more general principles. I really wish I did have time to produce a proper book on this material. Well if I can't and I probably won't be able to maybe somebody else will do that some time. O.K.

END OF TAPE