

## General Introduction to Sangharakshita's Seminars

### Hidden Treasure

From the mid-seventies through to the mid-eighties, Uryen 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 Uryen 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](#).

**WHITE LOTUS SUTRA  
STUDY LEADERS SEMINAR**

**1986 Padmaloka.**

Those Present The Venerable Sangharakshita, Dharmacharis: Abhaya, Buddhapalita  
Cittapala Dharmavat i Dharmaloka Dharmadhara Dharmavira Kulamitra Mahamati  
Padmavaj ra Prakasha Ratnaguna Ratnaprabha Ruciraketu Saddhaloka Susiddhi Suvaj ra  
Tejamitra Tejananda Virananda

Tejananda: Bhante, tonight we have got some eighteen questions for you on The Universal Perspective of Mahayana Buddhism, including three subsidiaries ( ? some of the later ones are quite brief questions. About a quarter of them seem to be on the subject of interpenetration. And we start with a set of three from Padmavajra, the first of which is about interpenetration and conditionality.

Padmavajra: Is the doctrine of the mutual penetration of all phenomena a logical development of the doctrine of conditionality, or does it represent an entirely new vision of existence?

S: I wouldn't say that it represented an entirely new vision of existence. One could say that it represents a development at least in terms of expression, at least in terms of articulation, of the provisional Buddhist vision. The doctrine of interpenetration is concerned, we might say, with the nature of ultimate reality and obviously there are a number of different ways of approaching that question. In the case of the pratitya-samutpada itself we are concerned with a phenomenology, we might say. But that phenomenology has certain implications, one might say certain metaphysical implications, which are not brought out in the Theravada. They are however brought out in the Mahayana, especially in the Madhyamika through, or by way of, or by means of its interpretations of the Sunyata teaching, especially through its interpretation of the Sunyata teaching of the teaching of the middle way - middle way between extremes. Middle way between the extremes of being and non-being, existence and non-existence. So in this way, from the more

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phenomenological approach of the pratitya-samutpada itself we pass to the more metaphysical approach. Still dealing with ultimate reality of the Mahayana, especially the Madhyamika. But it's as though subsequent Buddhist thinkers weren't even satisfied with that. Because it is as though, in the case of the Madhyamika, though not only in the case of the Madhyamika, the Madhyamika brought out more strongly something that was already there, just as the Prajnaparamita sutras brought out more strongly something that was already there; they brought out more strongly the fact that all phenomena, all dharmas were reducible to sunyata. So in a sense you have got a sort of merging of the particular in the universal. Dharmas lost, so to speak, their distinctive qualities, all that you really cared to see in them or to know about them was the fact that they were sunyata. So everything was reduced to

Sunyata. So in a way multiplicity was reduced to unity, so to speak. Because dharmas are many and sunyata is, so to speak, at least for purposes of discourse, but one. Then of course along came the Yogachara and they saw reality, at least for practical purposes, not so much in terms of Sunyata but in terms of the one mind. So they refused the multiplicity\+phenomena, or perhaps we should say the multiplicity of (what shall we say) mental phenomena to simply mind, the one mind if you like, absolute mind. But again with them too there was a reduction, so to speak, of multiplicity to oneness. Diversity to unity. But whoever it was produced the Avatamsaka Sutra, and of course traditionally it is ascribed to the Buddha himself, just as all the Mahayana sutras are ascribed to the Buddha himself, wasn't content with that. He wasn't content with the original, one might say, Buddhist Sarvastivadin position, the Hinayana position of (as it were) the one being lost sight of in the midst of the many - the many being the dharmas of the Abhidharma philosophy. Nor was he satisfied with the with the many lost in the one, as was the case with the Sunyata and the Yogachara in their different ways. It's as though whoever it was who produced the Avatamsaka sutra thought that, this is translating into Western terminology to some extent, thought that unity and multiplicity were themselves just concepts. You couldn't take it that multiplicity was unreal and unity was real or the other way around, they are just both concepts. And the question was, how best to use those concepts to express the ultimate and the nature of ultimate reality even though strictly speaking they couldn't be expressed. What was the best way of giving at least a hint, at least a pointer. So they seem to have come up with a solution that one should make use of the concept of unity and the concept of diversity and try to combine them in such a way that one had an even deeper insight, or at least a more adequate expression of the nature of reality. So therefore, in the case of the Avatamsakas they saw not all things in the one, nor even the one in all things, but they saw each individual thing in every other individual thing. They regarded that as giving a more adequate expression of the ultimate nature of reality. Probably the simplest general exposition of this point of view is given in Suzuki's The Essence of Buddhism, those two lectures which he delivered years and years ago before the Emperor of Japan. I think you probably know the work I mean. If anyone wants to go into this whole question a little more, but not too much more, more or less along the lines that I have suggested, you probably couldn't do better than to read that little work.

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This just answers the first question, at least in outline, it is a vast subject, obviously.

Tejananda: The second question from Padmavajra is on interpenetration and Sunyata.

Padmavajra: Could we make more use of the doctrine of mutual interpenetration, could it replace the doctrine of Sunyata which is often spoken of in terms of a transcendence of the subject object dichotomy? I have got a supplementary about Sunyata, shall I leave that for a minute?

S: Yes, just for the moment. What is the real question?

Padmavajra: Could we make more use of the doctrine of mutual interpenetration, could it replace the doctrine of Sunyata which is often spoken of in terms of transcendence of the subject object dichotomy?

S: I think it is a question of, for whom. I am not so sure that we should jump straight into the metaphysical deep end with everybody. I sometimes think it would probably be better if we started off by stressing much more impermanence. And of course impermanence does ultimately imply emptiness, it does imply Sunyata. Also there is a direct connection with the pratitya- samutpada and also with change and therefore also with the possibility of spiritual progress. So I am not sure that there should be any emphasis on the more metaphysical side of the Mahayana, at least to begin with. Who would be able to appreciate an exposition of the teaching of the Gandavyuha sutra? I am not so sure. I think on the whole I would tend to stress, if anything, the teaching of impermanence, in fact the three Laksanas, without going into metaphysical subtleties and refinements, as they must be for most people. Even in the case of Order Members I feel quite reluctant to talk at length about metaphysics, about Sunyata, or the one mind, when I find that the majority of Order Members even now have great difficulty practicing mindfulness in the affairs of everyday life and great difficulty sometimes even concentrating their minds. So I think I'd prefer to emphasise for quite a while, more basic principles. There was a supplementary question?

Padmavajra: How valid these days is the concept Sunyata? Was it only useful as a way of dealing with the highly conceptual state of medieval Indian Buddhism? If it is redundant why continue to chant the Heart Sutra?

S: As I said the teaching or doctrine of Sunyata is implied by the pratitya-samutpada itself, but it is a metaphysical implication of it. Or it is, perhaps I should say, a metaphysical statement of its implications. Because if you study the pratitya-samutpada at all carefully, at all closely, you cannot but arrive at some understanding of Sunyata, or something analogous to Sunyata. I have also pointed out in the past that one way of looking at Sunyata is of bearing in mind that Sunyata, which literally means emptiness, means empty of all concepts. It is a reminder to us that ultimate reality is empty of concepts. That is to say that all our

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conceptual constructions are inadequate to express it. It really signifies the indescribability of everything. Certainly its indescribability in, as it were, quasi-scientific, that is to say conceptual terms. So in that sense, at least, the doctrine or teaching of Sunyata is never out of place, never inappropriate, never out of date. But that is not to say that one needs, necessarily, to be acquainted with all the highly technical, purely metaphysical, almost philosophical in a Western sense, expositions of the teaching or tradition of Sunyata. One has to bear in mind quite firmly what it actually is all about, and what the point of it really is. Especially from a, so to speak, practical point of view.

Tejananda: Padmavajra's third question on interpenetration and a cosmic soul.

Padmavajra: In Tuscany 1984 you spoke of the Avatamsaka sutra's image of intercepting beams of different coloured lights as a while of-ustratin the fact that the universe had a sort of intelligence or 'soul' (in inverted commas) which was essentially ethical. This intelligence is such that the threat of great catastrophe

the positive counter forces. Have you had any more thoughts about this, could you elaborate

on the mutual interpenetration of all things being like a cosmic 'soul'.

S: I'm afraid I haven't had any more thoughts about it at all, The subject doesn't seem to have come up. I will say what occurs to me just now which may not be very much. Maybe you could go through the question clause by clause.

Padmavajra: In Tuscany 1984 you spoke of the Avatamsaka sutra's image of intercepting beams of different coloured lights as a way of illustrating the fact that the universe had a sort of intelligence or 'soul'.

S: It's not that the universe had a sort of intelligence or soul, as it were tacked onto it, that the universe was actually material but added onto it it had a soul just as we are really bodies but we have added onto us a soul, ourselves. Not that. I was trying to get at the point that the universe was, so to speak, instinct with life, that there wasn't in fact any such thing as a dead universe. That it wasn't dead on any level, that matter wasn't dead, that there was no such thing as dead matter, not even rocks and stones, not even minerals. Not even atoms. or electrons were dead in the way that perhaps science used to think of the universe as being. So I was thinking more along those lines, not of the material universe, or a really material universe, as actually possessing something which could be called a soul. Just as we don't think of conditionality as something which is a quality of conditioned objects, which is separate, but the conditionality is, so to speak, part of the very essence of those conditioned things. Again in the same way, a comparison I have used before, there is no such thing as gravity to which material bodies are subject, it is just a description of the way things behave. So when we speak of the universe as alive, or as having a soul, what we really mean that it behaves more like something that is alive than it behaves like something

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that is dead. Not that it has some separable quality called life, or some separable entity called soul which can be attached to it. And then?

Padmavajra: The fact that the universe had a sort of intelligence or soul which was essentially ethical.

S: Again, just as there isn't this detachable soul, so there isn't this detachable ethical quality. If you see what I mean. Just like, if you see a red flower, you can't take away the redness of the flower, and leave a flower that is completely colourless, which has no colour at all.

Dhammarati: Even if there isn't an ethical quality separate from intrinsic nature, are you still suggesting in the same way the flower has colour there' 5 a quality in the life of the universe that, for want of a better term, you describe as ethical?

S: This is what the term Dharma really suggests. Because Buddhism does in a sense take over from Vedic thought the conception of, what in the Vedas is called (Arita?) which is something like law, something like right, something like righteousness, and that clearly overlapped with dharma. Not as a quality of human actions or human behaviour, but as a characteristic, so to speak, of the universe itself. It's because the universe has a basically ethical quality, a basically ethical nature, that skilful actions result in happiness and unskilful actions result in suffering. That is the nature of things. It is not some arbitrary imposition, as when a human judge or law-giver might quite arbitrarily penalise certain actions and not penalise others~ with another law-giver, conceivably, doing exactly the opposite. So rightly or wrongly there seem to be deeply engrained in Buddhist thought, Indian Buddhist thought, the idea of the universe as sensitive, as alive, and even as ethical. But there is another point I wanted to make, I think in connection with that next clause, what was that?

Padmavajra: This intelligence is such that the threat of great catastrophe, such as nuclear destruction, will be naturally outweighed by positive counter forces.

S: Well that requires, I think, some qualification, because all sorts of disasters do occur, so where is that counter- balancing agency and what is it up to. I certainly didn't mean to suggest that any unfortunate development is automatically counterbalanced, but only that it may be, (or for certain, ?) unfortunate eventualities or even disasters may be under certain circumstances. But there is no guarantee that certain catastrophes are not going to take place and all sorts of dreadful things have happened in the past. But there is this counterbalancing tendency, at least. Not that it is necessarily always successful, again, so to speak, any more than we always are in our efforts to counterbalance certain unfortunate or negative things that may be going on around us.

Dhammarati: Does the counterbalancing tendency work just because the human mind will tend away from pain or are there other agencies that affect things independent of the individual minds

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involved? How does this counterbalancing influence work if it is not the individual mind?

S: Well, traditionally in Buddhism there are non-human entities, so to speak, in the form of Bodhisattvas, and not necessarily operating through a human bodily form. One could regard the Bodhisattvas as the focal points, so to speak, of that counter- balancing energy. But there is no doubt that in the karmaloka that counterbalancing force or energy acts directly only through human beings.

Dharmaloka: Bhante, would you suggest though that this tendency doesn't work apart from individual effort, or self conscious activity?

S: I am not sure about that. Because, supposing, let's follow the traditional Buddhist line of thought, that there are beings called Bodhisattvas, around in the universe, I can't personally imagine a Bodhisattva acting directly through the natural order by way of a sort of supernatural intervention. I can't really imagine a Bodhisattva..., supposing a house is about to fall down on somebody, I can't really imagine a Bodhisattva stopping the house from falling down. But supposing there is nearby an individual, an individual who is receptive to higher influences, I can imagine, so to speak, that individual being in touch with some - let us say higher energy, with a Bodhisattva - and the Bodhisattva, perhaps, inspiring that human individual to take action of that sort on the material plane. Do you see what I mean? But I certainly don't see the Bodhisattva, I don't see that counterbalancing force as taking action directly through the material order of existence. Perhaps it represents a limitation of my own imagination, but I must admit I can't see it. I think if one wants to see or thought that one saw it from a Buddhist point of view it would give rise to all sorts of doctrinal difficulties. But yes, I can certainly well imagine human beings being able to contact higher levels of existence, higher levels of experience where they were susceptible to higher spiritual influences which would motivate them in their behaviour on the actual material plane, or so-called material plane, itself. I think the question of how real the Bodhisattvas or those higher influences are in that sense, is a bit of a ~, not exactly a red herring, but it begs the question of what is 'real'. Because as the back of one's mind one tends to think of the real as being really the material. Even when one doesn't actually think that one thinks of the real by way of analogy with the material. Anyway, let's pass on.

Tejananda: The fourth question is from Cittapala about practices for insight into interpenetration.

Cittapala: Bhante, I was ~ust wondering whether you knew of any Buddhist practices related to cultivating the type of vision which is related with Indra's net?

S: In this little book by Suzuki which I referred to he gives a very interesting illustration, or rather it was a demonstration. Apparently a great Chinese Master of this particular tradition, in China, wanted to explain the doctrine of mutual interpenetration

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to, I think it was a Chinese Empress. So what he did was he made an arrangement all round the room of mirrors and candles, so that every mirror reflected all the candles and also reflected all the mirrors reflecting all the candles, and in this way he tried to give her some idea of what mutual interPenetration was like. One could try to visualize this and think in these terms. Of course it was inadequate because it was static. One would need to set the whole thing in motion, to give a somewhat more adequate representation. But at least it gives one some idea. I would say that probably one of the best ways of developing insight,



via this particular way of looking at ultimate reality is not so much by reflecting on the philosophical doctrine, as by reading to oneself, in a relatively concentrated state of mind, a chapter of the Avatamsaka sutra itself, or a chapter of the Gandavyuha itself. There is a new translation, there's one volume come out, a big fat volume came out last year. That gives one plenty of material, going through that, again mindfully and with concentration, you do get a very good idea, a very good feeling I would say, of the nature of that particular outlook, that particular way of looking at reality. This is the original sutra source and I think it still gives one a much better feeling (for want of a better word) for that approach than any of the more doctrinal expositions. It's the Flower Ornament Sutra, translated by Thomas Cleary. I think I have put my copy in the Order library now.

Cittapala: I understand that that was just a translation, the first volume of three volumes. Is that correct?

S: It could be, there is a second volume coming out in the autumn, but I suggest that the first volume will keep you busy at least until then. I would even go so far as to say that the first chapter would be enough. It's a very lengthy first chapter, all the chapters are very lengthy, and very detailed, and lots and lots of imagery. Something that really captivated me was all the names, all the names of Bodhisattvas and samadhis, they are so imaginative. There's hundreds and thousands of them, just going through these names is a sort of revelation in-itself, one might say. Pages upon pages of very, from our point of view flowery, names. So meaningful and so extraordinary sometimes. I am afraid they make even your wonderful Order names seem quite tame in comparison. But one can't give people these sort of names, unfortunately, because they are many many many syllables long.

Cittapala: There was one other question on that point which we were wondering about. That in Thomas Cleary's translation has he actually gone as far as translating the Gandavyuha sutra?

S: The Avatamsaka is a composite work of which the Gandavyuha is a part. To the best of my recollection, to the best of my knowledge, he hasn't got to that part of the text which is usually known as the Gandavyuha sutra. But the teaching is the same. The Gandavyuha exists in Sanskrit, the other sections do not exist in Sanskrit. He is translating, in this volume at least, from the Chinese. He is a Chinese scholar. I am not sure what he will do when he comes to the Gandavyuha, whether he will translate just from the Chinese or whether he will also consult the Sanskrit, I don't know. His translation

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is pretty readable, there are a few little quirks of his own, but nothing much, on the whole it is very readable.

Tejananda: Now we've got a question with a couple of subsidiary questions. The main question is from Dharmadhara on non-Buddhist expressions of interpenetration.

Dharmadhara: All phenomena, according to the Avatamsaka sutra, are mutually interpenetrating. You mentioned in the lecture William Blake, as a Western example of this visionary type of experience. Are there any other significant examples in other cultures and religions, apart from the Avatamsaka sutra and William Blake?

S: I can't think, really, of much off hand. I would say, probably, the expressions are very limited. Even Blake's I suspect, is very limited. Because if you speak in terms of all phenomena being reflected in each and every phenomenon then the question arises, what does one mean by phenomena. The meaning of that statement will be determined to some extent by what you mean by phenomena. And there are certain phenomena within the range of Buddhist thought, or Buddhist experience, which don't seem to be within the range of let's say Christian thought or Christian experience. Certainly not orthodox Christian thought and experience. So therefore the statement that all things are mutually interreflecting and interpenetrating would have a somewhat different and somewhat more restricted meaning within a Christian than within a Buddhist context. Do you see what I mean? So I am not so sure that there are any real parallels. Perhaps there are sort of theological parallels. Sometimes Christians speak in terms of Christ bearing all the sins of the world as though the sins are contained in him, or reflected in him, you could say. But that really is quite limited, because there isn't much said, or anything about Christ himself being reflected in every human being, with all those sins which Christ is bearing. Or there is not much said about, say, Christ being reflected in material things, though there is that verse in a gnostic gospel, or gnostic saying where Christ is represented as saying, 'Split the wood and there am I, lift the stone and there am I'. But that certainly isn't in the Bible as we know it. So there doesn't seem to be much of thought of interpenetration. There is Tennyson's flower in the crannied wall and all that, but Suzuki has rather torn that to pieces hasn't he? Not the flower but Tennyson's little poem he has shown to be rather contrived, rather constructed, rather even conceptual. So no, this does seem to be a distinctively Buddhist insight, or at least a distinctively Buddhist way of expressing a certain insight. No doubt if one looked into the mystics one could perhaps find some analogies, but I can't think of any off hand. Also, as I mentioned right at the beginning, the Avatamsaka teaching of interpenetration seems to come as the culmination of some centuries of development of Buddhist thought, and it presupposes that development, which obviously one doesn't find, it seems, anywhere else in the world. Or nothing analogous to it even.

Dharmadhara: Would there be anything like it in Sufism for example?

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S: I was just trying to think, but I must say, though I have read quite a bit of sufi literature, I can't think off hand of anything of that sort. That is not to say that the Sufis didn't have a

quite highly developed insight, in a way, but I can't remember any Sufi. But perhaps yes, something does now occur to me. There is what Western writers sometimes refer to as the pantheism of Sufism, which isn't really pantheism at all. Some of the, as it were, more poetic Sufi mystics do think of ultimate reality in terms of the Beloved (with a capital B) and they do very often speak in terms of seeing the face of the Beloved as reflected in all phenomena. That perhaps comes some way towards the Buddhist conception.

Virananda: Was Plato edging towards this problem, trying to deal with the problem of unity and multiplicity in his theory of form?

S: He certainly exercised over this question of unity and Multiplicity, I am not sure where his doctrine of forms stands with regards to that. But clearly in the Parmenides he is very much concerned with this particular issue, and in that particular dialogue seems to opt for unity as real and diversity as unreal. Whether the doctrine of the forms presents any sort of ( ? ) is difficult to say. The doctrine of forms is a very obscure one, and in any case interpretations seem to differ. But yes, Plato himself was very much concerned, it would seem, with this question of unity and difference.

Tejananda: Now a subsidiary of that point from Ruciraketu, on physics.

Ruciraketu: Do you think there is any useful modern material that might help us to understand and make more of the Indra's net? I am thinking there particularly of David Bowen's ideas, and perhaps even some ideas from Mmm-phenomenology.

S: I was trying to think of a scientific analogy but I think they are very partial. For instance the microscope has revealed all sorts of wonders. You can put a drop of water under a microscope and if the microscope is sufficiently powerful it reveals a whole world in that drop of water, in an amazing sort of way. But I don't think you could literally say, in the Buddhist, as it were metaphysical sense, that the universe was reflected, or that that was a case of the universe being reflected within that drop of water. Or that the world was reflected in that drop of water. But none the less, that experience of looking through the microscope, at a drop of water, does make one more aware in a more general way how much there is in how little. So it is a means of approach, a means of access I would say. As regards Western philosophy I don't remember anything of that sort, I am afraid. It does seem that this is a really distinctively Buddhist mode of thought. The only clear statement that I am acquainted with in Western tradition is Blake's, which may have its limitations if one considers the particular context within which it was made, but at least taking it abstractly it is a clear statement of the Buddhist position, to see the world in a grain of sand, that is pretty clear. But even

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Blake doesn't go so far as saying seeing each grain of sand in every other grain of sand. He

doesn't go as far as that.

Dhammarati: Ruciraketu mentioned David Bowen '5 writing, that whole idea of the implicate order. Is that something ...

S: I must say I haven't been at all happy wit~ that. I have 7een thinking about it, I haven't had time to devote to it really, but at the time I found it interesting but after reading his book I really had my doubts about whether he is really clear as to what he is actually saying. But I can't remember his argument in suffic~ent detail to be able to go into it, but I certainly wasn't satisfied with it. I think perhaps he was pressing an analogy too far, or the analogy didn't fully correspond to what it was he was trying to explain, didn't exactly fit. I think this is what I felt at the time.

V: Do you think a kaleidoscope would be a good Thmage of mutual interpenetration?

S: Yes, certain aspects of it perhaps. Because when you shake The kaleidoscope you see the same items rearranged in a different way, don't you. I remember when I was a child I had a kaleidoscope, I used to put little bits of coloured tinsel like paper you used to get wrapped around toffees in those days, put little bits of that in the kaleidoscope and one could produce some wonderful patterns. I think things of this sort do help at least a little bit to help to give one some inkling of what this teaching of interpenetration is about, but even that again is static, you don't get the dynamic element.

V: You get moving kaleidoscopes, and they keep Thanging as you

S: Do they, now. Well that's interesting, then that comes even nearer. Do you get holographic kaleidoscopes?

V: (

Tejananda: I was wondering whether there was anything in, I think its the Hermetic ideas, as above so below, sort of thing.

S: Yes, one could say, in a general sort of way. But that is correspondance, it is not exactly reflection in. Though it isn't just reflection in, that's not quite right, it is that each and everything is actually in a sense present in each and every other thing.

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In other words the whole idea separate thing-ness is broken down in this particular way, just as the Sunyata idea, the Sunyata concept of insight breaks down the idea of separate thing-ness.

Padmavajra: The Vajrayana has been spoken of us a sort of hermetic thing. Do you think it's not that, it is more mutual interpenetration ...

S: Yes, I think probably you could say that. I have myself spoken of the Vajrayana as containing a system of correspondances,

with the element rupa, or the skandha rupa corresponding, say, to Vairochana. But it is not that they correspond so much as that you see Vairochana in the skandhas, and Vairochana as seen in the skandhas is what we call rupa. It is not that there is a separate Vairochana up there and down there there is a separate rupa which corresponds to him.

V: Sorry, is it Vairochana actually or is it Akshobhya, corresponding to rupa?

S: Usually it is Vairochana, at least when Vairochana is in the centre of the mandala. But again the correlations are not always uniform, of the same thing from one system to another. Because the light of Vairochana, it lights up forms, it reveals forms, hence the connection between Vairochana and rupa. Though again, on the other hand Akshobhya is associated with the mirror like wisdom and Akshobhya is also sometimes put in the centre of the mandala, and the mirror reflects forms, obviously. So it is not that one particular Buddha is invariably placed at the centre of the mandala, though usually it is Vairochana, and when he occupies the centre of the mandala he seems to be usually correlated with rupa.

Tejananda: Now Prakasha has a question on Blake.

prakasha: In the lecture you mentioned that Blake's introduction to the of innocence is ~rableinrincile to the theme of the Gandavyu ha~sutra. How yclosel does Blake 5 vision a roach that of the Gandavyuha? What particular circumstances or abilities led him to develop such a vision? Do ou think that Blake had access to an concentration, or meditation practices that he might have either borrowed or developed himself to hel~ him to do that?

S: I don't remember that Blake ever engaged in anything comparable to meditation or concentration practice or exercise, but we musn't forget that he was an artist. And an artist does concentrate very, very in~tensely. One musn't forget also that he had a natural visionary faculty, and seems to have had a very positive attitude towards life in almost the highest sense. Where he, so to speak, got this idea of the world in a grain of sand I don't know. perhaps he just saw things like that, just as he saw the angel in the tree. Perhaps with Blake a lot of things that he has written about did come directly from his personal experience, even though he was very well versed in what we may call the alternative traditions that were surviving in his day. He seemed to be an unusually gifted person almost from birth. There was another bit to that?

Prakasha: Yes, how closely does Blake's vision approach the (;andavyuha?

S: I must say, as much as I admire Blake, it doesn't approach it very much. Just start reading that Avatamsaka sutra, I think you'll see. But it could be that Blake is more accesible so far

as we are concerned, that is a quite different matter, he may be more useful to us even than the Avatamsaka sutra. We may find the Avatamsaka sutra quite baffling, quite overwhelming, might find it altogether too much for us. Blake is

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sometimes too much for us. I think perhaps one would need to steep oneself in Blake's writings for a while and then go and do the same thing with the Avatamsaka sutra and see how one felt. Whether one did feel that one was getting more deeply into things with the Avatamsaka sutra or whether one simply felt that one was getting out of one's depth and it didn't really mean anything to one, whereas Blake did perhaps mean quite a lot. There is the question of our own spiritual, perhaps even intellectual preparedness. perhaps we do sometimes need these bridges and these links from our own traditions. Otherwise these deeper insights of Buddhism remain just matters of philosophy in the narrower intellectual sense and don't have much relation to or bearing on our own lives.

Tejananda: The eighth question is from Kulamitra and it is about translations of Pali in Theravada countries.

Kulamitra: It's just a point of clarification, Bhante. In the British Museum exhibition that was held recently there were a lot of different texts on display and I definitely remember seeing them in Burmese and Thai and so on. I am not sure, in retrospect, if that was just the script or whether there were some cases of translation from the Pali into, perhaps, Burmese or something like that. Are you sure that there are no translations from the Pali into any of the Theravada traditions?

S: Some years ago there certainly were not, except for quite short extracts. I remember reading about this some time ago. But in more recent years, in the course of the last twenty years certainly some work has been done, of this kind. I do remember reading, in Sinhalese Buddhist magazines, articles I think written by Sakra or someone like him, to the effect that it is really shameful that we haven't even started translating, or haven't made a decent start on translating the Majjima Nikaya into Sinhalese. The tradition was so much that if you wanted to study the scriptures, well you became a monk and learnt Pali, and did it properly, so to speak. I think there certainly are some translations now. I am very doubtful whether even now, say in the case of Sinhalese, as much as the canon has been translated into Sinhalese as has been translated into English. But certainly some work has been done, possibly now some substantial work. But monks kept up Pali studies so well and there was a definite tendency for those who took Buddhism seriously to become a monk, so it~ as though the need for vernacular translations wasn't felt. I have got the catalogue of that

exhibition if you want to check up whether there were any translations, any ( ? ) in Burmese or Thai languages as distinct from scripts.

Prakasha: To what extent were the Pali scriptures translated into the language of the Mahayana countries?

S: It does seem, I think that I have mentioned this in the Eternal Legacy, that quite a few Pali texts did get translated into Chinese. There might have been one or two translated

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into Tibetan, possibly via Chinese, but a few into Chinese, yes.

Prakasha: Is that just one or two texts or do you mean large sections of the Tripitika?

S: No, just a few texts, not necessarily, even, from the Tripitika. The one work that we know was translated but which was lost in Pali, is the Vimuttimaggā, which was superseded by the Visuddhimaggā, but in the mean time it had been translated into Chinese. And it has been translated from Chinese into English. But there were very few such texts.

Tejananda: Now a question from Dhammadhara on what the Mahayana calls the Hinayana schools attitude to themselves.

Dhammadhara: It is concerned with the identity of the Hinayana schools from within the Hinayana. Was there a name acceptable to those of the Hinayana schools obviously the Hinayana term is a pejorative name. How did they see themselves? Did they see themselves as a particular .?

S: There seems to have been no collective designation in use amongst them, which in a way is perhaps rather odd. This is why the term Hinayana is still used by Western scholars who are quite aware of its historical limitations. The Theravāda thought of itself as the Theravāda and the Sarvāstivāda thought of itself as the Sarvāstivāda, the Mūlasarvāstivāda thought of itself as the Mūlasarvāstivāda. The Mahāsāṃhikas thought of themselves as the Mahāsāṃhikas, the Vāśīṣṭīyas thought of themselves as the Vāśīṣṭīyas . There were dozens of schools but they don't seem to have employed, amongst themselves, any collective designation to differentiate them from the Mahayana. Perhaps they just thought of themselves as what we would call the Buddhist schools. But again there wasn't any collective designation. Perhaps they just thought of themselves as coming within the Buddhaśāśana , as they might have said.

Virananda: Bhante, do you think they actually identified themselves with each other, as

having factors in common, at the time, or was it simply retrospective of the Mahayana?

S: I think there must have been some sense of solidarity. They do seem to have been aware that they differed from the Mahayana and that the Mahayana differed from them. They quite consciously, it would seem, though we don't have much literature to go by, rejected the Mahayana sutras as the word of the Buddha. But they don't seem to have a collective designation acceptable to themselves for all those schools or traditions of Buddhists who did not recognise the Mahayana sutras as (Buddhavaccana?). So this is why we still make do with this rather uncomfortable term, Hinayana. Which can't be replaced by Theravada in all contexts, as would have it. It makes nonsense of Buddhist history. Because then you would have to say that the doctrine of Savramasti was a Theravada doctrine, which it wasn't, it was a Sarvastivada doctrine. But if you wanted to say it was a Hinayana doctrine but couldn't say that, had to say it was a Theravada doctrine, you would then be fastening Sarvastivadin doctrine onto the Theravada - which would give rise to an awful muddle. So you can't, I'm afraid, abolish the term Hinayana, at

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least for descriptive historical purposes, even though one is well aware of its limitations, even of its slightly pejorative character. But I have tended to stress, from a broader point of view, that the term Hinayana really represents an attitude rather than a particular doctrinal school and the term Mahayana really represents an attitude. How can you really think of, say, a Tibetan Buddhist, who doesn't really care for teaching the Dharma to other sentient beings, how can you really regard him as a Mahayanist, even though he may be well versed in what is technically Mahayana teaching. And if there is, say, a Bhikkhu from Thailand or Sri Lanka who is very concerned with the welfare of others, and very concerned with spreading the Dharma, well how can we really describe him as a Hinayanist. He may be teaching what is traditionally regarded as Hinayana doctrine in its Theravada form but his attitude would be thoroughly Mahayanistic. So it is a question of attitude, also. I think possibly it is better, outside the strictly historical context, to try to use the words Hinayana and Mahayana, possibly even Vajrayana, in such a way that they become descriptions of attitudes. I don't know what a Vajrayanic attitude would be. Oh yes, I know, the Vajrayanic attitude would be the sort of attitude that plunges into work, that finds in work the great Tantric guru. Someone who really loved work would be Vajrayanic - especially hard work! Especially work in Windhorse Trading. (Laughter)

Tejananda: Now we go onto a different topic with a question Mahamati about the parable that you give in the talk about the old and the young man.

Mahamati: Yes, this is about the parable about the great famine.



S: Yes, I did refresh my memory with it this afternoon.

Mahamati: Which you used to illustrate the difference between the Mahayana.

S: Yes, I had completely forgotten this particular one.

Mahamati: My question is a very simple one. It is to ask you what is the source for this parable?

S: I really can't remember. I don't think I made it up, I think I heard it, or something like it which I might have adapted from a Bhikkhu friend in India, but I can't remember who it was. So it is semi-traditional, I think. I probably just adapted. Don't forget I gave this talk fifteen years ago, so I can't remember what was in my mind when I composed it. But I do vaguely recollect hearing a story of that kind from a bhikkhu.

Tejananda: Dharmadhara has a subsidiary on that.

Dharmadhara: Fifteen years after giving this talk and having fifteen years of the Theravada taught and spread in the West, would you modify the parable in any way? Do you think they are more or less proselytizing now?

S: I don't think one can take proselytization as necessarily indicative of a Bodhisattva attitude. You did use the word

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proselytizing which is a slightly loaded word, even slightly perjorative in much the same way as Hinayana is perjorative. Because, very often, what Buddhist monks and teachers, from all Buddhist countries, perhaps, do, they spread their own culture. Sometimes the impulse is nationalistic, or rather perhaps one should say religious-nationalistic as much as it is purely spiritual. Perhaps quite often it isn't purely spiritual. So it couldn't then be classified as an expression of Bodhisattva like outward going-ness, as representing a purely Mahayanistic attitude. But if one is to speak in terms of actual attitudes with regards to the propagation of Buddhism in the modern world I don't really see that there is much difference between any of the schools, regardless of what they call themselves. They have all got at least some representative, let's say, whether monk or lay, who have a genuine feeling for other people and who wish to share the Dharma with them, and who therefore do have a more Mahayanistic attitude. Whether they may be teaching the Dharma in specifically Theravada or specifically Tibetan or specifically Zen terms.

Kulamitra: I think I understand what you are saying in that there are some individuals in all those traditions that stand out in that way and others who don't. Do you think our movement significantly differs in the balance of those types from those other Buddhist traditions

working in the West?

S: Well from the very beginning we have tried to go out Through our lectures and classes and so on. But I would say that for quite a few years, at least say for the first eight or ten years we didn't go out all that much to people and I think that was necessary at that time, because we needed to accumulate spiritual strength and experience ourselves. And we certainly haven't accumulated enough of that, even now, not by a long way. So you can only really go out to others spiritually when you have got something to go out with, when you have got something to give. So it isn't that any old Buddhist can automatically go out if he feels like doing it, no. You have got to go out, so to speak, from a basis of spiritual experience and spiritual strength. Your outward goingness has got to be a natural expression of that. So I am quite sure that in all the major Buddhist schools and traditions there are at least a few people who do have some spiritual experience, some inner strength, and who go out to others with the Dharma on that basis. I am sure that there are also others who just go out to others in a globe-trotting, sort of way. Who are perhaps anxious to gather disciples or anxious to spread their own national Buddhist culture. Or even just anxious to get the money in some cases, there are those too. But real spiritual outward goingness with the Dharma is another matter.

Kulamitra: Taking also Buddhist history into account, do you think then that this difference between what you are calling a Mahayana, Hinayana attitude, rather than which school you are attached to, is mainly a question of spiritual maturity? And that whatever school you are in, when you reach a point of spiritual maturity, you will from that basis of strength, want to go out?

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S: I think that is true, but I think that for one who, from a basis of spiritual strength and maturity, wants to go out, there is far greater traditional support within the Mahayana, in the historical sense, than within the Hinayana, in the historical sense. Because even in the case of the Hinayana, say in the case of the Theravada, if you dig deep enough, if you go back to what seem to be the oldest Pali texts and the Buddha's own example, you will find at least in principle the same outward going attitude that you find, outwardgoing on a spiritual basis, that you find in the Mahayana. But lots of Buddhists in Theravada countries don't go back so far as that. So therefore, even if they do have some spiritual experience and strength and want to go out on the basis of that, they don't have so much support from their own tradition, as a Mahayanist in a similar position would have. At least I think one can say that. Not that the Bodhisattva Ideal, even, isn't known in Theravada countries, it certainly is, but it is known as an exception to the rule. Whereas in Mahayana countries it is known as the rule for spiritual life. But certainly one mustn't allow oneself to be misled by labels. Someone may be teaching the Dharma entirely in Pali terms, or on the basis of the Pali scriptures, but it isn't necessarily teaching a narrowly Hinayanistic form of Buddhism. And in the same way, the Lama may be teaching in terms of Mahayana and Vajrayana and all that sort of thing, but he

isn't necessarily really communicating a Mahayanistic or Vajrayanistic attitude or spirit. Very often there is a sort of correspondance, but very often not. So one has to be able to read the real message that is being made, regardless of the particular language, even though the language may not be fully in accordance with the message. You might find that you meet a Theravada bhikkhu who assures that you should devote yourself entirely to your own salvation and own gaining Enlightenment and not bother about other people, but he may actually be most kind and considerate in his behaviour with you. In the other hand you may meet a Lama who assures you that you should devote yourself, as a Bodhisattva, to saving millions of human beings, but he may be very selfish and selfcentred in his actual behaviour. So one musn't be misled by words or professions. I think, Dharmadhara's question referred to changes that might have ocured over the last fifteen years. I think there has been a change on the part of some Theravada Buddhist in this respect. There has been a change among a lot of Buddhists from or in the East, partly due to the fact that at least in the West~,they sometimes do rub up against one another a bit, and also~~~o certain political and cultural events. Like the fact that so many Tibetan Buddhists had to leave Tibet, and so on. I had a letter from Asvajit the other day which showed that even in Sri Lanka certain attitudes are changing. For instance he said, this is quite amusing, or maybe it was in his letter to Shabda, I forget which, it was one or the other, if it was in Shabda you must have read it, where he wrote about the seats for bhikkhus in State buses and in the private buses. It was in Shabda? (V: Yes) Its clear, he mentioned that people resented having to give up their seats to bhikkhus and the private buses, if they saw a bhikkhu at the bus stop, and they were usually overcrowded, they wouldn't stop! So there is certain change of attitude in the ordinary laity, or at least some members of the laity, which is quite interesting. The bhikkhus have rather disgraced themselves in certain respects, mainly due to their association with politics , and party politics. They don't enjoy quite the same respect, very

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often, as they used to. Anyway let's pass on. How are we getting on?

Tejananda: We are just about to number eleven and we've got eighteen. Some of those are quite short.

S: You can never be sure, the questions may be short (laugb~er) Wut sometimes a little question goes a long way.

Tejananda: This might not be a short one. This is from Dhammarati about motivation towards Enlightenment.

Dhammarati: In the lecture you talk. I am not sure of the exact terms, but I think in the sense that there is an urge to Enlightenment which is in all life, and which in the Bodhisattva

becomes self conscious. First of all I wondered if there was some contradiction or conflict between that LLrqe to Enlightenment and the ego' 5 habitual resistance to new experience that you describe in (&~~ ~1/4~~ + 4r~ ) And more practically, it seems to be that much of my behaviour and much of the behaviour of most of the Mitras that I teach in study groups is motivated more by the ego' S resistance to new experience than by any imminent urge to Enlightenment. And I suppose one of the things as a teacher that I am interested in is how does one encourage the urge to Enlightenment to become self conscious, and to become one's dominant motivation?

S: Go through those again, clause by clause.

Dhammarati: The background, first of all, was that in the lecture you talk about an urge to Enlightenment which is in all life and which comes self conscious in the Bodhisattva.

S: First, the fact is that we know that life has evolved, say, life on this planet, has evolved from lower to higher levels. So we probably are justified in speaking of a sort of urge to progress from lower to higher levels. Not that in a sense one necessarily, so to speak, wants to, but it is almost as though one is forced to if one is going to survive. So perhaps its a bit like that on the human level. There is, yes, a sort of urge to reach higher levels, but at the same time there is resistance too. Because there is not only the higher level to which you are being forced, perhaps even by a question of circumstances, but there is the whole of the present and the past you holding you back. So I think in the case of the ordinary, let's say, wordly, person, the urge to grow, to progress to a higher level of existence hasn't become conscious in the individual sense. He hasn't, as it were, made it his own, he just goes along with the race, with the general tide of humanity. But in some people there develops a semi-conscious or partially conscious urge to go beyond, to achieve something better, something higher. And it may be in, well it is usually is, in a very vague arid unclear, unsure sort of way. But the more that develops the more there will be a sort of conflict between that imminent urge to grow and develop and the resistance that you as you already are, puts up to further development. One could perhaps divide people into three categories. There are of course the stream entrants for whom there is no real

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conflict. Not that they necessarily have an easy time, not that they don't have problems to resolve. But there is no real conflict in the sense that they can't slip back. But then at the other end of the scale you have got people who are not yet really individuals, who are just group members and who are carried along with the group, and who will perhaps grow if the group grows but not otherwise. But then you have got others who are sort of inbetween, who have developed some glimmering of individuality, some measure of individuality, and therewith some individual aspiration to reach a higher level of development but they can not only be pulled forward by that ideal but pulled back by the group working through their own group nature. Or through, as you put it, their ego. So the function of the teacher, or the

spiritual friend even, is to encourage individuality, to encourage responsibility. To try to detach the nascent individual from the overwhelming influence of the group, to encourage everything in him or her that leads him or her away from the group. Not by way of an alienation from the group but by way of a growing beyond the group. It is difficult, I suppose, to lay down hard and fast rules, because it's obvious that you have to, in the context of the FWBO, encourage them to meditate, encourage them to develop positive emotion, encourage them to free themselves from neurotic and dependent relationships. Encourage them to live in a single sex community, encourage them to go on solitary retreats, encourage them to be open with you and with others. There are all these things that one has to do, which of them one does at which particular time, well that just depends on the circumstances, or on the particular individual you're dealing with, and on you- self to some extent.

Dhammarati: I suppose it seemed a bit of a mystery, sometimes. I'll be teaching Mitras, a lot of whom have actually asked for ordination. And they ( ? )intention to go, but quite often they get so confused in their motivations, and that

S: But one thing you musn't also forget, that for a lot of people who join the FWBO, or who become involved with the FWBO and who learn the language of the FWBO but who are still basically group members, ordination is the gateway to acceptance. And acceptance is very important for people, it is their life, they can't live without it, usually. And some have a neurotic need for acceptance and approval. So when they say, even though with sincerity, that they want to go for refuge, that they want to be ordained, you must try to hear what they are really saying. And sometimes what they are really saying, and what they are saying to some extent, at least, a greater or lesser extent, is 'please accept me, I want to be accepted by you or by the group or whatever'. So you have to be careful, especially now the FWBO is growing a bit and quite a few people are asking for ordination, quite a few people want to belong, quite a few people want to be accepted and quite a few people have learned our FWBO language. You must try to listen to what they really mean when they use that language, I think this is quite important. I spoke at length, I think, some weeks ago, maybe in one of these study groups, about the way in which people can use current FWBO language, current FWBO expressions, entirely in a sense of their own, which is quite contrary to everything that we are trying to do. So one has to really listen, and try to hear, try to understand, what it is that people are really

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saying, regardless of the language they use. Again it is analogous to what I was saying about people who use the language of the Hinayana, or the language of the Mahayana. You have got to try and see what their real attitude is, whether their attitude corresponds with their language or not. Even in one's ordinary dealing with people, sometimes their language does not correspond to the impression that they make. For instance, I think it was Emerson

said, in one of his aphorisms, referring to some such person. 'Your actions speak so loudly I cannot hear what you say'. One has heard, for instance, preaching about the love of God, but the impression you get is anything but one of love. So we have to be careful that as Buddhists we don't go on about karuna or compassion, and tranquility and peace of mind in that sort of way. Do a beautiful talk about mindfulness and then forget to ring the bell. Well it has happened hasn't it! (V: Yes) (Laughter) It shouldn't happen too often.

Tejananda: I have now got a question which I am going to put, it is on behalf of Ratnaprabha who has gone through the tapes.

(end of tape 1)

S: Or was there more to the question.

Dhammarati: I think you covered it. I suppose I still feel a certain lack of clarity in myself as a teacher. Because you can sort feel sometimes, somewhere in a very confused motivation an urge towards real growth. And I just feel that actually supporting that, you do it so much by the seat of your pants, it's so ad hoc, sometimes you manage to get it right and sometimes you don't and you are groping for

S: Yes. I think one should be very careful not to simply apply a formula. 'What you need is a long solitary retreat', or 'What you need is to move into a single sex community~', or 'What you need is to give up your job', or 'What you need is to stop talking', or whatever it may be, and applying that to everybody. The one set formula - as it were, 'What you need is to work more'. You just have to look at the person feel the person, and try to respond to their actual needs and help them along the path that they have already started to follow if that is in fact a path leading to growth and development. Not try to switch them onto some other path which perhaps isn't so easy for them, or so natural for them. It's nice to get people going along what is exactly one's own path, but sometimes you have to advise people in their own interest, to do different things from what you are doing, or do things that don't particularly interest you but which you can see are going to carry them in the long run along the same path that you also are ultimately treading. You may love being in a single sex community, but you might feel that, for a certain person, that isn't the present, that isn't the immediate next step. It just means that one can't dispense with actually getting to know the individual person and becoming acquainted with their individual needs. I think the formula, as such, comes into play, when you have no time to deal with people on an individual basis, so you just try to apply the formula without looking too closely at them. So clearly, if one isn't to apply a formula, and it isn't good, really, to do so, you need to spend more time

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with people, get to know them better. I think then you will be able to see more and more clearly what is the next step that they should take, what is the path for them, in a more

specific way. That may take a lot of sorting out, because people are complex. It means a lot of care, a lot of trouble, a lot of effort on your part, just to stay with them through it all and help them along at the same time. Give what you can of yourself. And perhaps to begin with, at least in the case of the less experienced, don't think so much in terms of leading them or guiding them, but just being good friends with them. I think everything else will grow out of that.

Tejananda: Now a question on behalf of Ratnaprabha. I only hope that what he has written here makes sense.

S: (

Tejananda: It relates to the Higher evolution and the collective unconscious. He says: You say that the higher evolution series deal with the concepts of the unconscious, self conscious and universal consciousness. You then say that a fourth concept is needed, which will be dealt with in a future series; that is to say the collective unconscious. Could you say how this, i.e. the collective unconscious, fits into the scheme of the higher evolution.

S: That isn't really very easy, but I think one can say that one can look at the so called collective unconscious in two ways. I think there is what we may call a lower collective unconscious and a higher collective unconscious. I think the lower collective unconscious is that which is, so to speak, below our present conscious minds and the higher collective unconscious is that which is above - corresponding to the realm of the gods, even higher up still, the realm of the Bodhisattvas. And I think that does go quite a way beyond the conception of the collective unconscious in the Jungian sense. The collective unconscious in the Jungian sense would seem to refer to, perhaps I shouldn't say lower evolution, but it is certainly this side of individual development. Whereas the collective unconscious in the Buddhist sense is the other side. Is that clear?

Padmavajra Did you say that the collective unconscious in the Jungian sense is this side of individual development?

S: Hmm. Well for instance, supposing one takes a work like *The Origins and History of Consciousness* - that is really the history of how one becomes an individual. One emerges as a young hero, doesn't one, after encountering all sorts of archetypes, for instance the great mother, and overcoming her - do you see what I mean. So these are all archetypes of the collective unconscious, but they are archetypes which pertain to that level, or that stage, before you emerge as a fully fledged individual. But the gods and the Bodhisattvas are figures that you encounter further on in your journey, after you already have become a young hero, have become an individual in the ordinary human sense of the term. This is what I am getting at, though I am not expressing it very fully or very clearly.

Kulamitra: Obviously Jungian psychology is trying to deal with people and help them become more individuated, I think is their term. (S: Right) But presumably even for some of the people that come along to a spiritual movement, that is an area where there is still some work to be done.

S: Oh yes, it seems there is quite a lot of work to be done. Because people don't grow and develop evenly. They don't grow and advance equally all the way along the psychological front, as it were. Some parts of them are way ahead, so to speak, and other parts are lagging behind. One does become very aware of that when dealing with people individually, or at least hearing about people. And it would seem that within the Movement generally there are quite a lot of people, including perhaps a few Order Members who do have problems, even psychological problems, to work on still. This is not, in the case say of the Order Members to doubt the sincerity of their commitment and so on and so forth, but not the less, they still carry with them in some cases a legacy of psychological problems and difficulties. And there are all sorts of ways of tackling those. In the past I certainly haven't encouraged people having recourse to psychotherapy and so on and so forth, but mainly because that would carry them outside the Movement to say a psychotherapist who wouldn't, perhaps, be sympathetic to the whole idea of spiritual life and spiritual development. Who might give advice that, from a spiritual point of view, was wrong and misleading. But now that we are getting more and more within the Movement itself and within the Order itself, people with these, as it were, psychotherapeutic skills I feel much more happy about people in the Movement having recourse to these things, because they have recourse to them via, say, an Order Member, who shares the same spiritual back- ground and who will use whatever knowledge he has, whether it is of psychotherapy, or psychosynthesis, or Yoga, or Karate, or Tai Chi or Co-counseling, or Alexander Technique, all within the overall context of the Movement. So I think the situation has changed considerably over the last few years, in this respect. Do you see what I am getting at, do you see the point of view from which I am speaking? In the early days of the Movement I didn't encourage people to go outside the Movement at all, so far as I could help it, for anything, because they could be so easily swayed. The Movement was so small and so weak, they could be very easily tempted or weaned away from it. But now that's not the case, they can go out into all sorts of situations and not be swayed at all. And in the case of say going to a psychotherapist, or taking that kind of help. Well if they take it from an Order Member, or even from a Mitra who is trained in that particular way, well there is no danger whatever. But that is assuming that the Order Members who are teaching those particular systems or techniques, or applying them, themselves understand clearly what they are doing within the overall context of the FWBO and their own spiritual life. I do know that there are Mitras, at least, around the Movement, three or four of them I know of personally, who have been helped quite substantially by resorting to or having recourse to co-counseling for instance. And it does seem that more and more people are taking up these sort of things. psychos~nthesis, for instance, seems to have become a bit popular.

V: What's that?



S: I'll give you a little book to read.

Cittapala: To what extent do you think that we could employ some of those sorts of psychotherapeutic techniques in our introductory or beginner class/retreat, type situations?

S: I don't think it's necessary, always, a case of just applying those techniques, or whatever, as it were raw, or undigested. But Order Members can acquaint themselves with them and learn from them, and maybe pick up a few hints or wrinkles which they can apply when beginners come along. It is not necessary that you say to beginners, 'Now we are going to have a little bit of psychotherapy to get you involved more deeply in Buddhism', no. You have got all that sort of knowledge and experience at the back of your mind, as it were, and as you see the need you can apply certain things, certain principles and bring them into play within that context. Without necessarily making a big fuss about psychosynthesis or Gestalt therapy or whatever it happens to be. Just as for instance you can have experience of the communication exercises but if you find communication isn't going particularly well you don't have to say, 'well now we are going to sit down and do communication exercises', you can just use in your own communication with someone who finds communication difficult, some of the skills that you learned through doing the communication exercises, use them in such a way as to bring that person out, but without talking about communication, or communication techniques, or communication exercises at all. Do you see what I mean? So I am sure that you can bring the principles of whatever you learn into play within the FWBO situation, within the context of your spiritual life and your communication with other people, without thrusting them forward in this, what I call, raw, undigested state. Here I am thinking mainly of the Centre situation, and the classes and so on.

Dhammarati: So do you think, Bhante, that it would be better to, first of all, test those things in the individual situation or do you think we could be experimenting with class formats and course formats?

S: I think I don't at all mind experimentation, but I think it must be controlled. I don't mean controlled in the authoritarian sense but controlled in the scientific sense. You must be clear what you are setting out to do and what you are trying to find out and monitor your progress, monitor the results in a systematic sort of way. Not just go about it in a hit and miss, happy go lucky sort of way. For instance, say, 'Let's try to find out what would happen if we had a retreat which was devoted half to meditation, half to communication exercises. But why are we doing this? What are the results that we, perhaps, are looking for'. Do you see what I mean? And discuss the retreat properly afterwards and pool your experience, and if you come to any conclusion put them into circulation within the Movement via Shabda. 'This is what we found'. Do you see what I mean? For instance, some time ago, here at Padmaloka they had a combined Karate and meditation retreat. Most of the people that were coming were people who were into Karate, not into meditation, many hadn't done it before. Most weren't particularly interested in Buddhism, but it seems to have worked quite well.

That was an experiment. I think partly the reason for the experiment was to see what degree of physical activity was compatible with what amount of meditation. perhaps rather - contrary to expectations the combination seemed to work quite well. I don't know whether people are generally aware of that, but that is what happened. But keep the rest of the Order informed what you are doing, either by telling them beforehand or at least writing it all up afterwards with your conclusions if you did come to any. We must be careful not to get involved in experimentation for the sake of experimentation, as a distraction, but in the case of experimentation as a means to an end, the end being a more effective communication of the Dharma, and a more effective helping of people to grow and develop, I am quite in favour of that. I think we have reached the point, reached the stage, at least in Britain with the Movement, where we can quite usefully engage in experimentation in that kind of way. But again I emphasise keeping in touch with the Movement and informing Order Members via Shabda just what one is doing or has done.

Dhammarati: Are you happy, Bhante, to give Chapters that sort of autonomy or would it be useful to check it out with you first before doing anything?

S: I think you just have to use your own judgement. On the one hand I don't want people to have to come and ask me about every little thing, but if it is something a bit unusual or a bit way out or a bit doubtful, well by all means check with me. But if it something you are reasonably certain about, I think then there is no need. Maybe you will make a mistake, but if you report into Shabda about it I shall know and haul you over the coals afterwards! (Laughter) I heard that somebody, somewhere, I won't mention who or where, was feeling auras and I got to know about that, so I had a little word to say about that. I usually get to hear about things sooner or later. Anyway, let's carry on.

Tejananda: Our thirteenth question is from Dhammarati and it's about Arahants and Bodhisattvas.

Dhammarati: It's another point of clarification Bhante. In the lecture you contrast the Bodhisattva Ideal and the Arahant Ideal, and you compare the Arahant's limitations his lack of solidarity with other living beings where on the other hand the Bodhisattva has ~2fl~ydarit.

S: Of course this is clearly not the Arahant of the Pali Scriptures, this is the Arahant of Mahayana tradition and convention, one might say. The Arahant figure in this sense does represent a certain kind of spiritual attitude but it certainly wasn't the Arahant as for instance represented by Sariputra or Moggallana and so on. The Arahant of the Mahayana traditions is a bit of an Aunt Sally, put up to be knocked down; if you see what I mean. Which is not really quite fair, historically speaking.

Dhammarati: You go on from that contrast with an image, you contrast the two images of a sixteen year old youth,

which is the Bodhisattva and the battered old monk in tattered robes which is the Arahant. And you suggest that the sixteen year old vouth symbolises the ideal abstract, the ideal in a ( ? ) sense, and the Arahant suggests the ideal in terms of historical limitations and--acted out. (S: Yes, right.) I didn't quite follow..., it seems to me that that changes the meanin of the two ima es and almost su ests that it is

altruism of the Bodhisattva Ideal in the actual historical circumstances.

S: It isn't. If you see what I mean. Let me backtrack a little Wit first. When one says, for instance, that the Bodhisattva is young, one doesn't mean that he is young as distinct from being old. He is young, but he is eternally young. So the youthfulness of the Bodhisattva represents something which is outside time, outside space. In the case of the Arahant, he is old, you could hardly speak of someone as eternally old, unless you think of God the Father, the Ancient of Days, so the Arahant is not just somebody who is old- 'but someone who has become old. I mean this is perhaps just my personal way of looking at it, or at least of interpreting it to some extent. So therefore I regard this beautiful, youthful, figure of the Bodhisattva as representing the Ideal, the spiritual ideal, the transcendental ideal as it exists outside space, outside time, as an aspect of the Absolute. The Arahant I regard, or I interpret as that same ideal, but as embodied, as incorporated even, within the historical process, within space and time, or as manifesting under the conditions of space and the conditions of time. Which means it can't manifest fully. Suppo~~ n,~ou have actually realized~whatever~that eternally youthful~rhe~e~sents you as a human being, but can you manifest that spiritual ideal fully in your life? Your life has got only a certain length, you have only got two arms and two legs and one pair of eyes, how can you..., t;t~ere is so much to do, there is so much that you cannot do, there are all sorts of limitations. So can you, with the best will in the world, manifest that ideal fully? So within the historical process the ideal cannot actually be manifested fully by any individual, not even by the Buddha, because the Buddha died. To manifest the ideal fully he would have had to go on living for ever and ever, and living everywhere. So a limitation is automatically imposed if you are existing under the conditions of space and time, as an ordinary human being. So that is what the Arahant represents, that's why I speak of him as being a bit battered and a bit bowed. The ideal is there, but it is the ideal -from the particular point of view I adopt here - as manifested under the conditions of space and time.

Dhammarati: Given the Mahayana' 5 usual picture of the Arahant as the spiritual individualist, are you saying that in the terms of the image he is ....

S: Yes, he is an individual, with the limitations of an 7ndividual, but I am not from this point of view regarding him as the individualist. No, it is a different point of view I am adopting. I am trying to reconcile the two, as it were. I am leaving aside the traditional Mahayana way of looking at the Arahant, except in terms of iconography. I am looking

at the iconography afresh, not thinking in terms of the Mahayana and Hinayana and just asking myself - what does this mean, what is it saying? Much as I looked at the figure of St. Jerome and asked myself what does this figure say to me, what does it mean to me, to some extent apart from the significance of that figure for traditional Christian history and iconography. I have observed these beautiful paintings of the disciples of the Buddha, alternate figures of Bodhisattvas and Arahants; what does it mean to juxtapose them in this way? What does it mean, say, in the Christian context to juxtapose the figures of angels - beautiful youthful looking angels--and these old emaciated saints on earth? To me it has that sort of meaning, the one is the ideal existing outside time to which one is striving all the time, and the other is that same ideal as manifested under the conditions of space and time, as limited by space and time, struggling to express itself despite those limitations. You can see it shining through. Sometimes you see the poor old Saint or the poor old Arahant, he's bowed down and he is so old, and he is so worn, and he is so wrinkled, but there is something of the expression of the youthful Bodhisattva there at the same time. This is not, of course, the Arahant of Mahayana tradition. Perhaps that creates the confusion, perhaps I didn't make it sufficiently clear that this was my particular vision or particular interpretation of those figures, seen in that way.

Virananda: There seems to be some cross ( ? ) with the different bodies of, say, a Buddha.

S: Yes, right. The Sambhogakaya represents the ideal of Buddhahood as existing without any limitations. The Dharmakaya takes that process a step further, the limitations disappear to such an extent that the Buddha himself disappears because even the notion 'Buddha' -in respect of ultimate reality, or the ultimate spiritual ideal - is a limitation.

Padmavajra: I noticed reading some Sufi texts that they use the image of old men who have a youthfulness about them.

S: Yes. You can meet some young men who look terribly old! And worn and all the rest of it. Alright, let's carry on.

Tejananda: Another one from Dhammarati on fear and fearlessness.

Dhammarati: I have become aware recently of how much fear affects my behaviour, and how much it inhibits me, for instance from making effective contacts with other people and how much it inhibits me from acting. And it seems to me that it affects other people similarly. I wonder if you can say more about what fearlessness is given the emphasis that it is given in the five or six things that the Bodhisattva gives. And its ~ut almost in a pile, it seems, of such fundamental needs as material substance, culture and the Dharma.

S: Well it suggests that people are badly in need of fearlessness. But clearly it is not on the same level as things like food, really. It is on a much higher level, I would say. I think there will always be fear so long as there is a sense of

separateness. So long as there is a sense of - for want of a better term - ego. So long as that isn't transcended, or to the extent that it isn't transcended there will be fear. What are you afraid of, what are you afraid for; you are afraid for yourself, you are afraid of whatever threatens you, whatever threatens yourself. So the gift of fearlessness is ultimately the gift of Insight into egolessness, and this is why it is so important. So you could even say that the gift of fearlessness is an aspect of the gift of the Dharma, in a deeper sense. Not just the words of the Dharma but some actual experience of Insight. So one shouldn't be surprised that one experiences fear in all sorts of situations, it's just an indication of the fact that one experiences oneself as a self, as an ego, in all sorts of situations. And whenever you experience yourself as an ego, there is the possibility of fear. So you tend to look for safe situations where you don't feel threatened, where that uncomfortable sensation of fear doesn't arise.

Dhammarati: Is its placing between culture and the Dharma in the sequence of what the Bodhisattva gives significant?

S: I would say, if one thinks in terms of sequence, I would say it comes after - in the sense of being beyond - the gift of culture. If one regards the gift of the Dharma as the gift of the Dharma in the fullest sense, well I would say probably the gift of fearlessness is included in that. But perhaps there is a suggestion, in the Mahayana texts, this would require to be looked into, that whereas the gift of the Dharma is, so to speak, verbal, the gift of fearlessness is more in terms of one's own personality. You communicate fearlessness to others by being fearless yourself. So it is a quite direct communication of the Dharma.

Dhammarati: That means being egoless yourself.

S: Exactly, yes. Being brave is something different. Being brave is acting as though you weren't afraid even though you are. You see what I mean? Very often we have to do that in default of something better. Like resisting temptation. That itself is a spiritual quality to some extent, to be able to act as though you weren't afraid even though you are, because it means to some extent you have transcended the ego feeling. You don't allow the fear to dominate you, that is to say you are not allowing the ego feeling or the ego sense to dominate you completely. You can't stop it affecting you, at least as regards your emotional experience, but you don't allow it to affect your behaviour too much, you have got it within or under control to some extent.

Dhammarati: In the Precepts, for instance, you asked not to harm and you are asked not to take the not given; and for instance there are specific practices that address craving and that address hatred. Do you think it would be useful in the same sort of way to directly address fear?

S: Well fear would seem to be not to be a primary emotion in the way that greed and hatred are. I think I have written or spoken about this somewhere. In a way fear is included. But

there are some practices for eliminating fear, in the Vajrayana you certainly have some, as when you go and visit cremation grounds at night and perhaps even sit and meditate

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there, keep skulls and bones and things of that sort around you. Though of course you can get hardened to those sort of things, if you are not careful, and they just don't have any particular effect. Perhaps one should, from time to time, expose oneself to situations of which normally you are a little afraid. I mean, look at the reluctance that a lot of people have, most people have, to give their first talk. Look at the nervousness that they experience, their fear of failure, their fear of what other people will say, their fear of making a fool of themselves, and so on. But they get over it, they conquer that fear and eventually they don't feel fear in that situation, they can deliver a talk, and a good talk, without any experience of fear. So that means there is some little, at least, overcoming of the ego. That's a quite good example I think, because we have all seen this happen, especially in connection with the Tuscany and pre-Tusacany course. People are, so to speak, forced, to give talks, whether they want to or not.

Tejananda: Now a question from Padmavajra on the Paramitas.

Padmavajra: This is a sort of nit-picking question, in a way.

S: The world in a grain of sand, you know and an elephant in a nit. It's up to you to find the elephant, ( ? ) I can help you.

Padmavajra: You spoke of the fifth Paramita as samadhi. To my knowledge the fifth Paramita is usually described as the dhyana Paramita. Is there any reason for the change of term?

S: After fifteen years I can't remember. I can't think of one. I can't remember. You ( ? ) correcting me, I think that Paramita is always referred to as Dhyana Paramita. It refers to the state attained by samadhi, samadhi has a much broader meaning. I don't think we ever speak of samadhi Paramita, it might have been a slip of the tongue or it might have been that I did have some reason, at that time, for using the word samadhi instead of dhyana, but I must say I can't remember it now.

Tejananda: Now one from Cittapala on the writings of Mrs A.A.G. Bennett?

Cittapala: It was just that you referred to her article intitled, 'I went to him and said', and I was wondering where we might find this reference.

S: I think it is to be found somewhere in those six bound volumes of the Maha Bodhi that I have. She was a quite prolific authoress and a woman of quite formidable intelligence and learning, and while I was editing Maha Bodhi, at my suggestion, she did contribute quite a number of quite substantial articles. Also translated several from the German, quite worthwhile articles. In the last year or so I have had occasion to refer to my old bound volumes of the Maha Bodhi, which are the volumes that I actually edited myself. I think maybe not quite all of them, but I must say I was quite surprised what I found there.

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I had forgotten~all the articles that I had commissioned, or accepted, or edited in one way or another. There is quite a lot of quite useful material. Unfortunately some of the volumes have been eaten by white ants in Kalimpong, but most of them are still quite readable. There is a lot of very interesting material there of different kinds. You can find odd chapters from the Survey and the Three Jewels, published as soon as I had written them, because I just didn't have time to write articles for Maha Bodhi and work on those books. So I sometimes used to publish a slightly abbreviated version of that chapter.

Cittapala: I had one other question which was more of the nature of encouragement.

S: Yes, before I answer that. We are trying to track down Mrs Bennett's daughter who was her heir and executrix, to find out what happened to her manuscripts, especially the manuscript of her translation of the Bodhicaryavatara. Because Sfie did finally revise the first four chapters, which I have, but I don't know whether at the time of her death she had revised the others. So we have got an address which we are going to try, we think it is the correct one. And there may be things that we can publish, and I would like if possible, if she did complete her revision of her translation of the Bodhicaryavatara, to bring that out. She was quite a good friend of mine over quite a number of years, we had very extensive correspondence when I was in Kalimpong and she was in London, and after I came back in sixty-four I met her and we used to meet periodically and discuss various literary matters, She was a quite interesting lady and had quite an interesting life. I think there is brief biographical sketch of her preceding one of her articles published in one of those issues of the Maha Bodhi. A little sketch that I wrote from information she supplied. She spent a lot of her life as a translator, she knew French, German and Italian, I think Spanish, Chinese and one or two other languages. She was quite an interesting lady. She was also; I think, editor of the Middle Way, I think for a year. But it didn't work out, because anything that wasn't actually Buddhist, any misrepresentation, or any article which didn't represent Buddhist thought or Buddhist philosophy correctly, she just wouldn't print. Even if it was written by Mr. Humphries, (laughter) she just threw out all such articles, so she only lasted a year. I got a very sad letter from her about that, she did a good job while she was editor. At least she did, with respect of the Middle Way, what I did for twelve years, in respect of the Maha Bodhi. I used to say sometimes, I don't claim any credit for my twelve years of editorship except that I was able to keep an awful lot of articles out of the Maha Bodhi. (Laughter) I would often

alter them in such a way that they would be hardly recognized by the authors, but at least they were Buddhist articles. I am afraid I was utterly without scruples in that respect - I used sometimes to actually reverse what the author had said. But I never got a single complaint because people just wanted to be published, that was the name ( ? ) (Laughter). It was mind boggling to see what I made them say, I would get contributions from Hindus in which they would say, 'Buddhism is a branch of Hinduism.' and I would write 'not', Buddhism is not a branch of Hinduism'. (Laughter) This is quite literally what I used

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to do, this is an actual example. But there was not a murmur of complaint from anybody. Sometimes I used to cut the article by at least two thirds if I thought it a bit wordy - and again, no complaints, people just happy to see their name in print.

Cittapala: It's quite surprising you managed to survive that long.

S: There was nobody else to do the job. Nobody else wanted it, it was a thankless sort of task. I made something of it, but I must admit in the end I did get rather tired of it. But anyway, that is all by the by.

Cittapala: The other question was just, you mentioned angels and I was wondering if you had any plans to complete that third paper on angels?

S: I was thinking of that only the other day but I have got so much literary and editing work on hand. Again you see the limitations of the historical situation. (Laughter) Limitations imposed by space and time, especially time, with old age creeping on. But I haven't forgotten it, I hope one day to produce something. And also another talk or essay on St. Jerome, I have got both of them planned, especially the second, but there is just no time to write them out.

Tejananda: Final question from Abhaya on debate.

Abhaya: In your final description in the lecture of the different kinds of Mahayana sutras, you talk about the Vimalakirti, and you mention the great debate between Manjusri and Vimalakirti. I just happened to think about, when I heard that, the Tibetan practice of having debates, amongst the monks. Then I thought, that's an element which perhaps is lacking in the Movement. Situations in which we challenge one another about our understanding of the Dharma. What usually happens, as I understand it, is that we go to classes, maybe once in a blue moon, or a bit more often~ someone challenges us a~don'treall...

(end of side one) (gap in recording)

S: ... your readiness in applying that knowledge to any particular situation, especially that of



discussion or questions. Do you see what I mean? Because some people have comparatively little knowledge, but they are very ready in discussion, they can bring their knowledge forward very quickly. Others, have perhaps a lot of knowledge but they are not able to bring it forward, not able to bring it into play quickly. ( ? ) in a situation like that and they think of what they should have said afterwards, maybe a week afterwards. Dr. Johnson, to cite him, I think it was Dr. Johnson, maybe it was Goldstein - one or the other, I think the anecdote is in Boswell's Life of Johnson - made the comparison of one man might have some ready money in his pocket and would produce it very quickly, and the other might not have any ready money in his pocket and therefore wouldn't be able to produce it, but he could later on draw on the bank for a thousand pounds. Do you see what I mean? So some people are like that, some people have not got very knowledge, but it is all ready, it

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is all in their pocket, as it were, they can bring it out quickly. Others have got an enormous amount of knowledge but it is stowed away in the bank and they can't get at it when they need it, they can only get at it afterwards. Do you see what I mean. So really the question falls into two parts, one - how we are to increase our knowledge, and the other is how we are to develop the ability to bring that knowledge into play when it is required. So assuming that we have knowledge, assuming that we have a fair knowledge of the Dharma, then for (Order Members?) the question well be should we not try to develop our encourage situations of debates, so to speak, when we are forced to draw our knowledge and justify our position. Yes, maybe that is a good thing. I think, actually, there is quite a lack among Order Members, there are very few Order Members that I would send out into a situation where in discussion with intelligent well informed people they had to justify their position as Buddhists. This is where I felt one of the respects in which the video- film about Tuscany fell down. Maybe its not the film as such that falls down so much as the people interviewed. Because most of them seem so inarticulate, or perhaps they weren't given enough time, but you got the impression that they were good chaps and their hearts where in the right places, do you see what I mean, they were sincere, but they couldn't really justify their position. Justify what they were doing, or give a proper account of themselves. You must have all seen that. Did you think that yourselves.

Abhaya: I didn't see that.

S: Did anyone think that?

V's: Yes. V: It made the film feel quite (woolly?) V: ... didn't quite know what they were doing, actually.

S: Yes, as though they were good chaps, they had nice smiles and they went for runs every

day, but it was as though they didn't really know, they couldn't really say why they were there or what they were doing. And I think that perhaps that impression was produced also partly because one just arrived in Tuscany, at Il Convento and there wasn't really much account given of how people came to be there, their previous history, their previous evolution, perhaps over years, wasn't traced. They are in Tuscany, and perhaps didn't realize how they got there and apparently they didn't realize either how they had got there. (Laughter) ( ? ) there is some truth in that, but in a slightly different way. So, we don't want to be glib, or anything like that, but I think we really do have to be able to justify our position in a rational sort of way and not just collapse into, 'It's just the way I feel', and, 'You know how it is', and all that kind of thing. But that just needs practice, we have sometimes to go out and meet with people, and talk with them. It is not easy, because sometimes people come at you from such a very different angle and sometimes they aren't very willing to listen to you, or they are not very receptive, or they don't really hear what you say. You must be prepared for that

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too, you must be patient. Even if you have the capacity, not be too much of a steam roller, not overpower them too much, even if you have the capacity. But yes, I think we have a lot of work to do in this area. I think about ninety five percent, I think we have only done about five percent, in this respect, in this area, of what we should, as an Order, do. Not more than five percent, we are very weak, this is one of our weakest and most backward areas.

Cittapala: Do you know what exactly the form is that the Tibetans take in their ...

S: I am afraid it is rather ritualistic in the sense that they study the texts, they know all the tricky questions and they know the answers. And they are supposed to be able to produce the right answers to the appropriate questions. It is not spontaneous, that is the last thing that it is. You have to be able to come up with the correct answer. If you answer off your own back, off of your own intelligence and intuition they are quite baffled. I know, because I have tried this with them. (Laughter) If you don't give the traditionally correct answer they don't know where they are, sometimes. So that means the tradition has become a bit ossified, a bit stereotyped. I think if you came up with a genuinely new objection, the run of the mill Geshe, even, would have great difficulty coping with that.

Suvajra: Bhante, do you know how they are getting on in the West, with their debating tradition? Teaching westerners.

S: I am not sure, but I assume that they are doing it along the same lines. They are certainly doing it along the same lines, as far as I know, in India, in their various monastic settlements.

I deeply offended one Ge she because I rather made light of this (tarksay?) and I said I didn't think very much of it, it was just a sort ( ? ) I said, in Tibet you have this tarksay and in England they play football, it is much the same thing. (Laughter) It is a game which is adversarial, and there are certain rules that you have to observe, and there are wins and losses

and draws. This Geshe or Lama was quite offended by this ( ? ) but this is what I actually felt. There wasn't any real spiritual significance in it, but that is not to say that one shouldn't discuss things. And of course they have got all these interesting gestures, there is the gesture that you make when you ask the question, or which you make when you ask a question which you think he can't answer, it's a 'I've got you now'. And then there is a gesture of, 'No you haven't', and he comes back with the reply. And there are even shouts, and it all makes it quite interesting, you use up lots of youthful energy, and it is said to help you remember the traditional, logical arguments. It is a good grounding in all those things, but you have to be able to use all that rather than be used by it, and I think the vast majority of Geshes are used by it, they are not able to use it. So I think we just need to be able to give a more coherent account of ourselves and what we stand for, and that's all. In some ways telling life stories is a bit of a cop-out. Life stories are all right but I think there shouldn't be too many of them, it shouldn't become too much of a habit because you don't really have to exercise your reasoning capacity, your logical ability, you just have to exercise your memory and

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be a bit open, and everyone has a good time and you learn more about one another, but you don't really develop your mind, you don't develop your thinking capacity. We don't have anything of that sort corresponding, say, to the telling of one's life story. To tell your life story you don't have to do any preparation, no homework, nothing like hardwork, you just remember. No looking up of texts, no thinking, this is why I say it can be a bit of a cop-out perhaps, even though very, very useful in its own way. Like, 'Why I Believe in Rebirth', give a talk of that kind. What is the basic principle of the pratitya-samutpada, what is the difference between conditionality and causality ( ? what is the basic position of the Abhidharma. Comparatively knotty topics of that sort. What does one mean by the mutual interpenetration of all phenomena, what does that actually mean, that phrase1 what does one mean by saying that one thing is in another. What do you mean by saying that the world is in a grain of sand, how can the world be in a grain of sand, it Th much bigger. (Laughter) Well in a sense, everybody loves to quote this, everybody accepts it but what does it really mean? Do you seem what I mean. I think we are not nearly vigorous enough intellectually, we have still got a lot of work to do in this area. People are not nearly critical enough intellectually. And by critical I don't mean carping, I don't mean cynical, I mean genuinely concerned to understand and to communicate that understanding. So in a way, in the case of some of these early lecture series, I was letting people get away with quite a lot, because they are not very rigorous, not very logical, and quite enjoyable with lots of lovely images. But it is not all really as simple as that. There is nothing wrong with the lovely images but one musn' t just enjoy them in a self indulgent sort of way and avoid the more rigorous disciplines.

Cittapala: When you said telling life stories is a bit of a cop-out was that any reference to what one does in the Chapter meetings?

S: I wasn't thinking of Chapter meetings specifically, but one could say that it was, in a sense, if it became too regular a feature of Chapter meetings. Because it would be a cop-out in the sense that it was easy to do, requiring little preparation, and very little thought, and not requiring any response, or much in the way of response. So it represents a pretty easy time for everybody involved. I am not trying that one shouldn't tell life stories though they do seem to have got a little bit out of hand. If you have so much to talk about, and your life is really so interesting and you can go on week after week and evening after evening, I suggest you just write an autobiography, work on it properly, as it were, refine it, and really ask yourself, how should I describe this particular episode in my life. But I think in the context of Chapter meetings there should be room for more serious, thorough going, discussions, and exchanges of ideas, where you sharpen one another's wits in the best sense.

(end of tape 2)

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Tejananda: Tonight we have got twenty-six questions on The Drama of Cosmic Enlightenment. We start with Abhaya on the genesis of the Mahayana sutras.

Abhaya: Could you say a bit more, Bhante, about the genesis of Mahayana sutras. In The Eternal Legacy you say that Mahayana sutras are revealed directly or indirectly by the Buddhas Samboghakaya, or body of glory, and somewhere else you say that we are not to think of them as necessarily delivered at one time and in one place. Does this mean that they are esoteric sort of non-public sutras composed by Enlightened disciples or do we have to believe a germ of them at least was uttered by the historical Buddha or are they utterly non-historical?

S: That is quite a complex question, one could spend the whole evening just discussing that. So I think I am going to have to confine myself to some quite general remarks. So perhaps we could break up the question into its constituent parts, there are about seven or eight questions there.

Abhaya: In The Eternal Legacy you say that the Mahayana sutras are revealed directly or indirectly by the Buddha's Samboghakaya.

S: Right, so that's the first point. One cannot regard the Mahayana sutras, at least in their present form, as having been delivered by the historical Buddha Shakyamuni. I think that is the first point. It may well be that some of the teachings contained in those sutras do go back to Shakyamuni, there may even be imbedded in those sutras some of the actual words of Shakyamuni. But as a whole those sutras, some of which are fairly extensive indeed, cannot possibly be regarded as representing his actual discourses. So the question then arises, what was the genesis of the Mahayana sutras? If they weren't the utterance of the historical Buddha whose utterance were they? Certainly they purport to be the utterance of the historical Buddha, though in saying that you at once raise all sorts of questions, because the ancient Buddhists did not distinguish historical from non-historical. So they would not have thought, or may perhaps not been able to think of a sutra as having been given from a non-historical as

distinct from a historical Buddha. Those were not their categories. But from our point of view where did those sutras originate? They are represented as originating from the Buddha but if it wasn't the historical Buddha, and if those sutras do represent a communication from the Enlightened mind, as they appear to do no less than the PaE scriptures, then we can only assume that certain gifted disciples, at a later date had certain experiences of, as it were, communication from the Buddha, from the transhistorical essence of Buddhahood, which they wrote down as best they understood it in the form of the Mahayana sutras. In all sincerity attributing those sutras to the Buddha himself. It is not that they were deliberately composing something of their own which they proceeded to put into the mouth of the Buddha. Do you see what I mean? That would have been entirely foreign to their way of thinking. One might even be prepared to admit that there were different levels of inspiration

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let us say, that sometimes what purported to be Mahayana sutras, the utterance of what we may regard as the Samboghakaya, sprung from a rather lower level of inspiration. But at in the case of some Mahayana sutras one can't resist the impression they sprang from a level of inspiration - to use that impression - as any that we encounter, so far as we are able to judge, in say the Pali Canon and with respect of utterances which seem to be those of the historical Buddha. So do you see what I am getting at here? So it would seem that the Mahayana sutras, broadly speaking originated in the spiritual experience of spiritual gifted disciples who were able to reach out to a level corresponding to that of the Buddha's own spiritual attainment and receive there - so to speak - a communication from the Buddha which they thereafter embodied, perhaps sometimes in their own language, in what we know as the Mahayana sutras. Then, the next part?

Abhaya: Well I think you have answered quite a few of those. I next say; does this mean they are esoteric non- public sutras composed by Enlightened disciples?

S: Well they are certainly composed, or let us say, transcribed by Enlightened or comparatively Enlightened disciples. But what was the first part of the question?

Abhaya: They are esoteric non-public sutras.

S: Esoteric and non-public? (Pause) I certainly don't get the impression that they were esoteric and non-public in the sense of being withheld from ordinary people or other members of the spiritual community in a way, or to an extent that the Hinayana sutras were not. One must also remember that a lot of the Mahayana sutras were produced at a period when writing had become much more common than it was in the Buddha's day. So the fact that those sutras were committed to writing, or even perhaps composed, meant that they would automatically have a wider circulation than was possible for something that was transmitted orally and had to be learned from the lips of a teacher with whom you were in personal contact. We also know that many Mahayana sutras have colophons extolling the virtues of copying and distributing the sutra. So that would suggest that Mahayana sutras were not thought of as esoteric documents at all. Certainly not in the way that the Vinaya was. It is an offence according to the Vinaya to teach the Vinaya to one who is not a bhikkhu. So in the case of the Mahayana sutras there is no such prohibition. In fact one is encouraged to transcribe and

transmit the sutra to as many sentient beings as possible. Which is of course an attitude in accordance with the Bodhisattva ideal. Then?

Abhaya: I think you might have dealt with the next part, which says - or do we have to believe a germ of them at least was uttered by the historical Buddha.

S: I did touch on this because one does find sometimes incorporated or imbedded in the Mahayana sutra some reminiscence of what would seem to be the teaching of the historical Buddha. I especially noticed this recently going through a translation of the Lalitavistara where there are definite chunks of, I suppose it would be Sarvastivadin

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works included in this very, very highly legendary account. And these passages have been identified, and sometimes they are quite extensive passages, not just a phrase here and there but whole paragraphs, and quite a number of them. There they are imbedded in this very colourful Mahayana sutra. And even in translations you can see the difference in style and approach very, very easily, because these quotations are all in rather sober vein and the rest of the text is not in that sort of vein at all. It's very, very legendary; very, very mythic rather, very, very poetic, or as we might even say very exaggerated. In contrast to those passages included or worked into the text of the sutra from the earlier Canon.

Abhaya: The last part of the question I didn't get a chance to read. They do not seem to bear the marks of oral traditions like the Pali sutras do. What textual evidence is there apart from the fact that they are in verse, that the Mahayana sutras are orally handed down? They seem to be much more like genuine literary documents.

S: Indeed they do. And I accounted for that by saying that they find that they were written down, or even came to be composed, writing seems to have become much more widespread in India, so they do not bear usually the hallmarks of oral transmissions.

Tejananda: I'll just bring forward a question from Ratnaprabha which seems to bear a relation to this one. You mentioned that the sutra emphasises the dire consequences of disparaging it. It goes even further and says, 'Those who slander this sutra/ if I told the tale of their evils/ I could not exhaust them in a whole kalpa./ For this cause and reason/ I especially say to you/ amongst undiscerning people/ do not preach this sutra.' Presumably to save them from the consequences of hearing the sutra and being unresponsive to it, or even disparaging it. The implication is that it is better not to hear the Dharma at all than to hear it and react. Do you think that this is generally so? If so does it mean that all forms of transmission of the Dharma, or at least of teachings like this sutra, should be selective, given only to those likely to be receptive, and not indiscriminate, like printed books or public talks?

S: Again there are several questions here. I think that the reason why the Mahayana sutras make these sort of statements, or the reason why these sort of statements, the statements which Ratnaprabha gives, are found in the Mahayana sutras is really two fold. It is partly as it

were polemical. Because Mahayana sutras were not accepted by the Hinayanists - to use that term - as genuine Buddhavaccana. And sometimes the Hinayanists seem to have criticised or even slandered, from the Mahayana point of view, those sutras. So I think those sort of warnings which the Mahayana sutras contain or with which they sometimes end, are partly polemical in intent. But I think at the same time they are partly the expression of a genuine concern for people's spiritual well being, tha~

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they should not reject or not be put into the position of rejecting something which it can only do them harm to reject. I think that one has to be quite careful about this. Because it is not as though there is some avenging deity waiting to punish you. But if you are not receptive to the truth or if you get into the habit of not being receptive to the truth and closing your mind to something which you can't immediately accept and understand you do come to be in a rather Parlous condition, spiritually speaking. So I think the Mahayana sutras are really saying that it isn't a very skilful thing to present a pupil with teachings, which given their general attitude and mental makeup, they cannot but reject. And if those teachings bear the label Buddhism, well they have rejected apparantlyorso to speak, Buddhism. So when you feed people material you shouldn't feed it to them in such quantities that they are quite unable to digest it and are bound to vomit it up, so to speak. I think this can sometimes actually happen. But you have to be again quite careful in another sort of way In the last century there was a great controversy in the church, I think as between the perhaps the Anglicans, or perhaps the Evangelicals, on the one side and the Catholics on the other. I forget the precise details but as far as I remember, somebody, either an Anglican or an Evangelical got hold of a pamphlet I think it was, written by a Catholic priest called 'On reserving the Communication of Religious Truth'. That if for instance someone who was interested in Catholicism came to see you you didn't all at once talk about those Catholic dogmas, for instance like the infalibility of the Pope that are almost bound to put him off at first. You spoke about things like; that the Catholic church teaches that you should love your enemies and should forgive, give them all that sort of thing that they would be able more readily to accept, keeping these other teachings, these other doctrines or dogmas, in reserve. So this was the doctrine of reservation in the communication of religious truth. Not that you yourself doubted the dogma but that you recognised that it was not very easily acceptable by someone who was just beginning to be interested in the Catholic church and its teachings. So the Anglicans or Evangelicals or whoever it was, got hold of this pam~et, as far as I remember, and they at once accused the Catholic church of hypocrisy. That you are not being open with people with regard to what you really believed, it wasn't a question of reservation it was just a question of straightforward hypocrisy. But you can see that the Catholic priest, in a way, had a point, in a general sort of way. Because if you do explain or expound, or try to explain or expound certain things to certain people before they are prepared, well you may simply scare them off or scare them away. So the underlining sort of principle seems to be, that people progress very slowly on the spiritual path, they are not prepared for the later stages of that path, or the teachings pertaining to it all at once. But on the other hand there is something in this accusation of hypocrisy. You could use this doctrine of reservation of communication of religious truth in a way that wasn't quite honest, that wasn't quite straightforward. So it is a

matter of some tact and delicacy. Do you see what I mean? For instance, supposing someone asks you in a class 'Does Buddhism not believe in God?' Supposing you said, 'Oh no that's not so, lots of Buddhists believe in God' - that wouldn't be straightforward and honest.

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Suppose someone did ask you, 'Does Buddhism believe in God?', and you knew that if you were to say that Buddhism doesn't - full stop, that person wouldn't come to the meditation class again. What should you say? It's quite a difficult question. I would say that you should in a sense temporise, using that word positively. Say, 'Well the word God can be understood in a number of different ways. Nowadays there is a lot of discussion even among Christians as to what God really means. Even as to whether there is a God. Some Christians, even, raise that question. In Buddhism we don't pronounce very readily about matters concerning ultimate reality. We are very cautious about making any statement about ultimate reality and from the Christian point of view ( God is a statement of ultimate reality. So we prefer to concentrate on the actual practice of ethics and meditation with a view, eventually, to having a deeper understanding of these things for ourselves, out of our personal experience.' You could say something like that. So you wouldn't be hypocritical, on the other hand you wouldn't be untrue to the Buddhist teaching, the Buddhist tradition. Sometimes people want to corner you and force you to make a statement one way or the other, but you mustn't allow yourself to be pushed into a corner in this way. Sometimes you have to say, well look, Buddhism is a vast subject, it is not easy to understand, it is not easy even for us to understand it not to speak of any newcomer. So we suggest to just take it bit by bit and concentrate on observing the precepts, practising meditation and just reflecting on whatever teachings to begin with appeal to you most. Leaving the others aside if you find them too difficult or not very acceptable. We don't insist that you sign the thirty-nine articles of Buddhism, or rather the three hundred and ninety of Buddhism on the spot! - even if we had them.!

Tejananda: Now a question from Abhaya again on how to approach archetypal material.

Abhaya: Again in the Eternal Legacy, Bhante, you refer to Mahayana sutras as works of symbolic religious art, and to the White Lotus Sutra particularly as a masterpiece of symbolic spiritual literature. In the Bodhisattva Ideal Mitra One you remind us not to take the Mahayana sutras literally but to see them as giving us a glimpse into a sort of archetypal world but not as providing an actual pattern for Buddhist living. Could you suggest ...

S: Yes, not as providing a pattern for Buddhist living in the literal sense. For instance, when it says such and such Bodhisattva travels to all the Buddha worlds, to so many universes, well can you do that, you can't do that, literally. You have to ask yourself what is it getting at, what is the broad general principle behind it and how can I best apply that particular principle in my own very limited life.

Abhaya: That sort of begins to answer the actual question. Could you suggest fruitful ways to approach this non-conceptual material in our Mitra study classes?



S: It is very difficult to say. I think the main thing Ths you have to avoid literalism. You have to familiarise yourself with the letter of the text, obviously, but not take it too literally, or literalistically. BecauSe quite a lot of people I do find, approach almost any Buddhist material in a very literalistic sort of way. They seem to grasp the letter quite tightly and often miss the spirit completely. Have you noticed people doing this, or even noticed yorself doing it sometimes? I would almost say, if I wasn't afraid of being misunderstoo~, 'Don't take it too seriously.' Read it like you would read poetry, really good poetry, like we read a very good novel, to enjoy it and immerse yourself in it. YOu can get down to a study of the details and what they actually mean and the deeper significance of the sutra perhaps later. I think it is very necessary that you allow the work as a whole make some impact, or to have some impact on you, to begin with. Try to experience it as a whole to begin with, not be lost in the details of it.

Abhaya: But from the point of view of classes, we are approaching it in some sort of detail, so the problem is how to deal with it. I think it is a bit more difficult than

S: Yes, I am afraid I haven't been taking Mitras for study on this particular text for a while! What do you actually do, tell me this, what are you going to do. how are you going to approach it? How much time are you going to have in any particular study group?

Abhaya: Well we will only have one week per lecture, one three hour session per lecture.

S: I think what you have got to be careful not to do is ~ust to deal with a little section of the text. Are you dealing with the text or with the lectins?

V: The lectures. They will make notes of the Vectures and we'll study the notes.

S: I would certainly encourage everybody, that is the Mitras as well as yourself, to read the Sutra itself. I think it is necessary to do that. And then to use the study of the lectures to throw light on the sutra. It's not that the study of the sutra should throw light on the lectures, it's the study of the lectures should throw light on the sutra. That's the correct way round. I must say I don't know if I can be very helpful here because I haven't been in the situation of teaching the subject, going through the lectures or points raised by the lectures with Mitras in study groups in this kind of way. Perhaps I should put myself through that sometimes, if I have time. But I think the main4anger is that you might lose sight of the wood for the trees. Because if the students don't study the sutra and then perhaps they don't study the whole lecture carefully but just concentrate on a few points, then you are not really studying the parables, myths and symbols of the White Lotus Sutra, you are just studying particular individual points. Do you see what I mean? I think you have to keep the work as a whole and the

lecture series as a whole constantly in view and relate your material, or the particular topic of discussion to that. So I think you have to encourage people to read the sutra, and read it again and again perhaps and then be reading through the lectures, perhaps constantly. Constantly revising so that whenever you do discuss a particular point in the study group they can at once see the place of that point within the whole scheme of the lectures and the sutra itself. Do you see what I am getting at? It almost seems that you need more time than you actually have, doesn't it.

Abhaya: Yes, it's very unsatisfying.

S: Perhaps you should think in terms of trying to do extra study with individuals, especially say individual Mitras who are especially interested. Maybe give them extra tutorials in addition to the class study.

V: They all have to projects on the lecture series. That is quite good to make that a basis on which ...

S: Yes, because if the projects are given skilfully then it will be clear from what they produce whether they are beginning to get a grasp of the material as a whole. The sutra as a whole and the lecture series as a whole and some feeling for the parables, myths and symbols of the sutra in general. One doesn't want to be dealing with little bits of material that don't have much relation to one another. Is that clear? Or anybody not happy about that, from a teaching point of view?

Tejananda: We now have a question from Susiddhi about the structure of the sutra.

Susiddhi: The White Lotus Sutra seems to consist of two main revelations. Mainly that there is in truth only one spiritual path and that what we perceive as the historical Buddha is really an expression of Enlightenment which is eternal. Chapters one to ten seem to be an independent drama providing a setting for and an amplification of the first revelation. Chapters eleven, fifteen and sixteen then provide a setting for the second revelation. Do you think there might originally have been two independent teachings which were brought together to form the twin nuclei of the White Lotus Sutra?

S: I don't actually think so. I have thought about this because it has occurred to me too that the sutra, leaving aside that rather miscellaneous cluster of chapters at the very end, does quite naturally fall into those two divisions. But I don't see any reason to regard them as having been originally independent works. Though they have their distinctive themes, they seem to hang together. One seems to me to correspond to the relative Bodhicitta and the other to the Absolute Bodhicitta. One is concerned with the spiritual path which clearly exists in time and is followed in time, and the other pertains to the ultimate reality which exists outside space and outside time. Ultimate reality as embodied in the Buddha. But I don't get any

impression of discontinuity or of two independent sutras having been soldered together to make a single work. I don't get that impression and to the best of my knowledge this has not been suggested by any scholar who has made a study of the work. But nonetheless I think you are correct in detecting that difference of theme between those two sections, yes. In fact I had thought of giving a talk, or giving a lecture on this point, because I think there is quite a lot to be said. But I think distinctio 4 represents the basic structure of the sutra. The first sutra being concerned with the nature of the path, that there is only one path, one yana ultimately; and the other that the Buddha is not confined to his historical manifestation. That there is so to speak a Buddha principle which transcends space, transcends time and which is, so to speak, the true Buddha, the real Buddha. This is the twofold message of the White Lotus Sutra.

Susiddhi: (I'm glad I asked you?)

Tejananda: Now a question from Virananda about the date of Kumarajiva's translation.

Virananda: this is to some extent a kind of nit-picking little question. In the lecture you attribute Kumarajiva's translation to the T'ang dynasty. The T'ang dynasty as far as I can see was initiated about two hundred years after Kumarajiva's death. So should we make that clear to correct that?

S: If that is so then we should correct it. I can't remember what I said in The Eternal Legacy.

Virananda: You say something slightly different there. You say that the work belongs to the most creative period of Chinese art and ( ?

S: I have a vague recollection, it's only a vague recollection, when I gave The Eternal Legacy its final check I removed some more concrete references because when I checked I think I found that one couldn't assign him to a dynasty in that straight-forward way. I rather suspect. I think it might be good to go through the list of Chinese dynasties, because sometimes it isn't really quite straightforward. A dynasty persists sometimes in say Northern China after it has died out in Southern China or been replaced in Southern China. Or there may be several dynasties functioning in different parts of the country at the same time.

Virananda: Yes, I have checked.

S: Yes. It may well be that in some of these lectures when I refer to dates and dynasties it isn't always quite accurate because I am just speaking from memory. If this is, by the way, edited say for Mitrata then points like that would be cleared up and any correction which was necessary would be made. This is happening with the other series.

Tejananda: The sixth question is from Prakasha on Nitcheren.

Prakasha: Conze describes Nicheren as Nationalistic, Pugnacious and Intolerant. What is your opinion?

S: Well I am inclined to agree with Conze. I did have years ago, I am afraid it disappeared, it is not any longer in the Order library, a life of Nicheren written by a Japanese scholar and he made it quite clear that he was as characterised by Conze. I think Conze must have read that particular biography. It is not that he was just that. He had certain other admirable qualities too, but he certainly reminded me of a figure from Christian history rather than a figure from Buddhist history. I think there is no doubt about that.

Prakasha: I have got several related questions. Conze says that Nicheren thought that the Japanese were the chosen race which would regenerate the world. Was Nicheren influenced by Shintoism which is nationalistic?

S: It could be. Though, again, what does one mean by influenced by Shintoism? Shintoism or nationalism is something which is in the air, so to speak, you imbibe it in your earliest days. You don't have necessarily to read a book about it. Well in the case of Shinto there are no scriptures, it is a very ethnic religion. It could be that Nicheren did imbibe his nationalism from what we call Shinto. But it is not that there was a separate sort of thing called Shinto in his day from which he imbibed that nationalism, it was just, as it were, in the air. If you think, for instance, of the people in Britain, The National Front people. Do they necessarily read an intellectual presentation of the case for the superiority of the British and so on and so forth. They just sort of pick it up, in most cases. Do you see what I mean? So I think something of that sort happened in the case of Nicheren. There may have been sociological reasons for his nationalism but that is another matter.

Prakasha: Conze quotes Nicheren as saying 'For the Nebatsu is hell, the Zen are devils, Shingon is a national ruin and the rich are traitors to the country.' So what led Nicheren to this intolerance, was there any Christian influence?

S: I doubt very much whether there was any Christian influence. It seems to have been largely a matter of temperament on Nicheren's part. I mean he did make these extraordinary statements, there is no doubt about it and some of his present day followers still take statements of that sort very seriously. Or even if they are not actually aware of those statements as such that kind of spirit has been communicated to them. You could argue that that was just very extreme language for a specific spiritual purpose, but even if that was the case it is a very dangerous sort of language to use. I think that is the sort of language that really is to be avoided. You can believe, perhaps, that certain forms of Buddhism don't fully present the truth of Buddhism or that they have their limitation, but to say that they are devils - presumably Maras - is quite a different matter. I don't think even the Hinayanists said that the

Mahayana sutras were the product of Mara, they simply said that they were not Buddhavaccana.

Prakasha: Conze is doubtful that Nitcheren is a Buddhist at all. Would you agree with this and what should be our attitude and a roach to the Nitcheren rou s springing up in the West? Are they likely to be intolerant of us?

S: Let's take that bit by bit, What was the first part.

Prakasha: Conze is doubtful that Nitcheren is a Buddhist at all. Would you agree with this?

S: I wouldn't agree with their not being Buddhists at all, because after all they do base themselves, or profess to base themselves on the White Lotus Sutra. And something of the teaching of that sutra, the real reaching of that sutra must come through. At least they read that sutra. So even though they maybe intolerant and fanatical there is nonetheless there is some element of Buddhism there in the midst of all that, acting one hopes as a sort of leaven. Perhaps it differs from individual to individual. Just as some Christians fasten instinctively on some of the more gory chapters in the old testament whereas others will fasten equally instinctively on the sermon on the mount. So it may well be that certain people belonging to the Nitcheren school or schools may fasten on the parables, myths and symbols but others perhaps more on the utterances of Nitcheren himself. Then what did you ask?

Prakasha: What should be our attitude and approach to the Nitcheren groups springing up in the West?

S: I think in many cases the question won't arise because They prefer, usually, to have nothing to do with Buddhist groups so you probably won't meet them. But I think if one does meet them well one will just have to try to adopt a positive attitude to communicate. Perhaps if you say that you also appreciate the White Lotus Sutra well that will be an opening. But I get the impression that a lot of the Western followers of some of least of the offshoots of the Nitcheren school don't have much knowledge of the White Lotus Sutra. They chant Nam-myho-rence-kyo and that's about it. But if you do meet someone who is better informed well at least you can say you appreciate the White Lotus Sutra. I am afraid they won't be satisfied with that because they maintain that the White Lotus Sutra is the one and only sutra. Well we can't go along with that. The group that follows the late Fujigaruji is an offshoot the Nitcheren movement. Reading Fujigaruji's life one can't help feeling that he was a very awkward sort of person. He has written his little biography which we have in the Order library, a translation of it and its quite quaint. For instance he goes and squats outside some embassy and beats his drum loudly in such a way that everyone is disturbed and when they come and politely ask him to stop he complains of persecution and says he is glad to suffer for the sake of the White Lotus Sutra, and things like that! So they inflict, sometimes, their drum beating

and chanting on people and in a way which is quite unpleasant. But they just don't see this, just like some Christian evangelists; they believe that they are witnessing to the truth. Courtesy and consideration for others just don't come into it. I think this is most unfortunate.

I have recently been thinking that perhaps one shouldn't always, or only

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distinguish religions as it were vertically, here is Buddhism, here is Islam and here is Hinduism, but also horizontally, because they all have their different layers. Buddhists in the sense of the Nitcherens have got their evangelicals, their fundamentalists; in a sense some Theravadins fall into that category. And sometimes it is more difficult for a Buddhist, a Buddhist like us, to talk to a Buddhist fundamentalist than it is say to talk to a Christian who isn't a fundamentalist. There is that sort of cross relationship almost. You might be talking to a broad minded old Anglican priest, you might find you have more in common with him than you have with a follower of the Nitcheren school and he might find he had more in common with you than he had with his avengical brethren, or say someone in the Salvation Army. So I think that is probably a point that could be considered. Anyway, not now.

Dhammarati: Can I just ask something Bhante? I was reading a women's magazine recently and in had an interview with Tina Turner, Jeff Banks and this other girl called K~tharine Hamnett.

S: Who are these people?

Dhammarati: Tina Turner is a pop singer and Jeff Banks and Katfimmerne Hamnett are both very good fashion designers. It turned out that all three of them were Buddhists, which is what they said, in fact all three of them are involved with Nitcheren. And I couldn't help but wonder, to me it seem to be quite a new teaching, almost. It seems to be going very quickly and actually spreading amongst quite soph- isticated people. I wondered if you had any thoughts on this.

S: I am slightly aware of this, I must say I don't as yet Wave any thoughts upon it. It seems to be almost to be a Cliff Richards type of Buddhism, if you know what I mean. (laughter)

V: Well quite, apparantly sophisticated people could get involved with Rajneesh.

S: But what does one mean by sophisticated?

V: That'ss why I said apparantly.

S: I think there are quite a lot of people who don't want Tho think, want just to believe something and follow something, quite implicitly, like children. But I think it would be interesting to try to find out whether there is anything we are overlooking in presenting the Dharma to people. Perhaps we expect too much too soon, perhaps we don't put things simply

enough, perhaps we aren't sufficiently positive and confident. The evangelicals are always bursting with confidence, they have got it, they know the truth and this does communicate

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itself. Because we know from our own experience and contact with people, so many people are lacking in self confidence. And people who are lacking in self confidence are impressed by nothing so much as self confidence. So our hesitant, tentative gentlemanly approach doesn't necessarily inspire them with confidence. We can be hesitant and tentative because basically we are sure of our position, but we are not sure about every detail of it or every possible application of it. But sometimes it is our hesitancy and tentativeness that comes across more than our basic depth of conviction, whereas they are convinced all the way through, they have got it all worked out, they are certain about every little detail. Like the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons and so on. They have got an answer for everything, they are positive with definite affirmatives. And this is what a lot of people like, people who are themselves lacking in self confidence. So I think we have to perhaps examine the way we put things across. But certainly if one feels interested to go into this particular form of Buddhism, if it is a form of Buddhism a little more and just meet some of the people who have been captivated by it and ask them what they found in it, what they responded to, what appeals to them. It is worth knowing perhaps.

V: I was speaking to one of the Nitcherens in the Richmond group and I think what they appreciated was that it was a very simply, direct teaching, this is the truth and all you have to do is say this mantra. And they didn't do study or anything else, they didn't know very much about Buddhism, they were just given this mantra and that is all they had to consider. So it's almost as though it is taking over a bit, in a Buddhistic form, from the Maharishi. Because that is basically all they got, a mantra, there wasn't much in the way of teaching or study. So perhaps it is just a matter of fundamentalism, nowadays, being available in all sorts of forms, including a Buddhist form. And lots of people go for that, and some of that who would formerly have gone for Christian fundamentalism were more attracted by Buddhist fundamentalism. Perhaps it is a Nitcheren who comes knocking on their door and not a Mormon, or not a Jehovah's Witness! It is a question of who knocks on their door first. Anyway let's pass on.

Tejananda: Now a question from Kulamitra about the worship of sutras.

Kulamitra: The sutra talks of faith as the emotional equivalent of wisdom and recommends worship of the sutra as a practice. Some people seem to see homage to the White Lotus Sutra as their only practice. Could this ever be a full path to Enlightenment?

S: Depends, I suppose, what you mean by worship of the White Lotus Sutra. I think that could be an approach to the path to Enlightenment at least. But as regards worship of a text I am not so sure how easily this would come to people in the West. Not that it is impossible, but it is a little foreign to our tradition, actual worship of a text. Though this does feature in some religions. It features very prominently in Sikhism,

in Sikhism they don't have images, the object of worship is the Adi Granthi which they call the Guru Granthi the volume of the six scriptures. And they have this beautifully printed or written volume on a silken cushion or a sort of throne with a canopy over it and they make offerings to it. Just as is described in the Buddhist sutras, the Mahayana sutras, this is probably where it came from originally. I suggested that we do keep a scripture on the shrine and we have it in a little glass case, as it were, just to protect it from incense and offerings and just have it open. I don't know whether some of the centres have taken this up at least on special occasions. Perhaps some have, it would be suitable for instance for Dharma day. But if you want the symbols for the Three Jewels on the altar, you need to have a book. The symbol of the Buddha is the image, the symbol of the Dharma is the scripture and the symbol of the Sangha is the spiritual community itself, the Order. So I think it would be good if we did have a volume of the scriptures on every shrine.

Kulamitra: I suppose I was thinking that apart from the teaching of Nitcheren it almost seemed to be a form of Pure Land type of Buddhism. Purely devotional, but in this case with the White Lotus Sutra rather than Amitabha. And I wondered if there is actually inherent in that form, taken to that extreme a limitation or whether for some people it could actually take them into an insight into the White Lotus Sutra.

S: I think that the standard Buddhist teaching is that the Five Spiritual Faculties including that of faith must be balanced. I think that is the standard, the classical Buddhist teaching and I think it is best, probably, to stick to that. Even though for the time being one particular faculty may predominate over the others. But I think in the end you have to have them in equilibrium. I don't think there is a question of alternative paths, as is sometimes suggested in Hinduism. If you start off travelling on the path of devotion I think sooner or later you have to bring in the path of wisdom, you have to join wisdom to your faith. The one reinforces the other.

Tejananda: the next question is from Mahamati about a series of talks that you spoke about on archetypes.

Mahamati: You mentioned in the first and second lecture that the collect~ve unconscious needs to be included within the framework of the Higher Evolution, and you hinted that you might investigate this at a future time. And my question is first of all whether you did that?

S: Actually I didn't, no. That was one of my undelivered series of lectures.

Mahamati: In that case can you,~something as to what you had in mind?

S: I am not so sure now that I can remember what I had in mind then. But only that~ obviously, we were talking in terms of archetypes of the collective unconscious and also talking in terms of the spiritual path and different stages and levels of consciousness. So clearly one would need to



bring the two into some sort of relation. I think I did this very briefly yesterday when I spoke in terms of a lower collective unconscious and a higher collective unconscious. Correlating one with the path of lower evolution and the other with the path of the higher evolution.

Mahamati: I was wondering whether you had a full series and whether it would be possible to give quite an extensive explanation of that.

S: It probably would be, but I don't have it in mind at present I am afraid. I have a lot of things in mind at present, a lot of things on hand, but not that I am afraid. I am not quite sure why, it is as though my interest has shifted away from that at least for the time being. But I have no objection to others exploring those areas. In fact I would like to see them do that.

Tejananda: This is a question from me about the name of the sutra. What is the symbolical significance of the title, White Lotus sutra? How exactly does the title relate to the content of the sutra? And most translators just called it Lotus Sutra, is this just carelessness and inexactitude.?

S: It's the Saddharma-pundarika Sutra. I think the emphasis needs to be on the Saddharma. It is not just the Dharma but it is the real Dharma, the true Dharma. Because it contains a higher revelation, both in respect of the unity of the three yantras and in respect of the eternity of the Buddha. So one can understand why it should be called the Saddharma.

One has the same sort of thing in the case of the Lanka, because it is the Saddharma-lankavatara Sutra, the entry of the real Dharma, the real truth into Sri Lanka. I think to call it the White Lotus, the pundarika real Dharma is.., well I wouldn't like to say just a flowery addition, but Indian Buddhists were very fond of that sort of style. We have got the Karuna-pundarika Sutra, the White Lotus of Compassion Sutra. One could of course look at the symbolism of the sutra, that it blooms, the rising out of the mud and all that sort of thing - but you could apply that to any sutra really, any sutra represents or embodies the transcendental truth in that kind of way. Though no doubt one could give an exegesis of the title in such a way as to demonstrate the whole teachings of the sutra. I don't think that really is the case or was originally intended to be the case. I think it is more a question of a pleasing and evocative sort of title. And as I said I think the emphasis is on the fact that it represents or embodies the Saddharma, the real teaching of the Buddha, the higher teaching if you like.

Dharmaloka: You later in one of the lectures make a point of the vegetable symbol. Would it be possible as well to connect this with the title as well, the lotus as a symbol of growth and organic growth. So the Saddharma growing, so to speak, or the realisation of the truth growing organically?

S: Again you could apply this to so many sutras. And also in the case of the second half there is no question of organic growth because you are concerned with something which exists eternally outside space and outside time. At most it would only apply to part one.

V: What about the last part of the question, the White Lotus, does that have any significance. It seems to be only you translates as White Lotus.

S: Pundarika is White Lotus just as utpala is blue lotus.

V: We were wondering why other translators don't translate it as white lotus, is that just carelessness on their part, do you think?

S: Not necessarily. Strictly speaking pundarika is white lotus but I think at the same time I think it is sometimes used simply to mean lotus.

V: Soothill translates it as white lotus - The white lotus of ( ?

S: Does he. Possibly then the Chinese did. But I think perhaps one could say that it is lotus in general but specifically the white lotus. It really means the lotus which is white but just a little tinged with pink. I have seen these lotuses growing in India , they are very beautiful, they are quite big lotuses. Not lily like.

V: So Pundarika is white tinged with pink?

S: Yes, I think one could say that. It doesn't look like a water lily, it is not spikey. It has good, slightly blowsy sort of petals. The Chinese, in some Chinese paintings you see the pundarika, the lotus in this sense represented quite beautifully. It has these big pods. Anyway, let's pass on.

Tejananda: Now a question from Prakasha about the preceding and succeeding sutras in the Threefold Lotus Sutra.

Prakasha: The Sutra is often called the Threefold Lotus Sutra. What use and significance do the preceding and succeeding sutras have in relationship to the White Lotus Sutra?

S: It does seem that the preceding and succeeding sutras are what we might call apocryphal sutras. They seem to be Chinese compositions. I have touched upon this I think in The Eternal Legacy. That is not to say they don't have their value. Some of the imagery in the introductory sutra, the preceding sutra is really quite extraordinary. So they do have their own value. I must say I haven't worked out, as yet, any actual doctrinal connection. No doubt that could be done or no doubt it has been done by the Nitcheren scholars. But it would seem in a way that they are a bit superfluous, because I think the White Lotus Sutra stands complete in itself. I don't think the sutra needs that introduction and that conclusion in the form of those two extra works.

Dhammarati: How do you differentiate? You call these two sutras apocryphal. How would you differentiate between an apocryphal text and a Mahayana text which was claiming its descent from the Buddha through some revelation, (or however you were describing that?)

S: In the case of Chinese works something is regarded as apocryphal when it purports to be a translation from the Sanskrit but is not actually so. In other words it doesn't stand on its own merits as a sutra revealed, let us say, to a Great Chinese Master and written down by him in Chinese. It arrays itself with a whole, what shall I say, - it is tricked out one might say with an array of names of translators and dates when it was translated and where, under which Emperor, which is almost like de~ception. So it is this fact which makes it apocryphal rather than a Mahayana sutra in the Indian sense. It purports to be a translation of a Sanskrit sutra when it isn't. In some cases it has been known from early times that a particular work, because the Chinese have got or did have a quite highly developed critical sense which they applied to their own literature and to Buddhist works as well. A critical sense in the way that Indians never had. So they didn't find it very difficult to distinguish between different works and they are quite aware of stylistic differences and are quite aware that certain words came into use in such and such centuries. They are very well posted in all those sorts of things to an extent that didn't become common in Europe until after the Renaissance.

Tejananda: A question from Dhammarati about the Mahayana and higher truths.

Dhammarati: This comes from the incident Bhante when the Buddha explains to the assembly that the ( ? is very difficult to understand, only Buddha's can understand it, everybody else has to approach it gradually.

S: Of course the Buddha says the same thing in the Pali scriptures with regard to the pratitya-samutpada, doesn't he? So this is true of the Dharma generally.

Dhammarati: The question I was going to ask was, do you accept that there is any truth in the Mahayana suggestion here that its teachings are more full and more profound teachings than the ones that historically precede it? Is the Heart Sutra and the White Lotus Sutra in some sense a more profound teaching than the historically earlier teachings?

S: that is a very difficult question. Because who judges what is profound? Because studying let's say a verse of the Dhammapada may see the whole of truth in that and he might feel that just the teaching of the Dhammapada or the teaching of that verse was very profound. He would be able to see more in it perhaps than others. Sometimes the implications of an apparently simple saying are really quite vast, quite extensive. Perhaps one might say that some texts or some sayings are more obviously profound than others. I think it is very difficult to be able to make a blanket statement. Certainly some Mahayana teachings are more elaborate than others. If you take, for instance, the sunyata teaching, certainly the Mahayana sutras have gone into this in a much more thorough going fashion than any Pali text. So perhaps broadly speaking one could say that the teachings of the Mahayana were profounder in that sort of sense. And perhaps you need some acquaintance with the Mahayana to be able to appreciate the depths of some of the Buddha's teaching in the Pali scriptures. Perhaps it is

there but it is not so well articulated, for various reasons.

Padmavajra: Would you say that the expression of the truth was more sophisticated in the Mahayana sutras, more developed, but the actual experience that they are pointing to is profound in the early scriptures ...

S: You could say that, because their linguistic sources were greater. They had developed their Buddhist vocabulary by that time, they had refined it, they had removed confusions. The Buddha had to make do with whatever vocabulary came to hand. It was a vocabulary, it was a language which was employed by the people around him who hadn't his Enlightenment experience. But he had to use the same language, but try and use it in his own way. Hundreds and hundreds of years later when some of the Mahayana Sutras were written down or composed Buddhists had developed much more a language of their own which was more adequate to express their own insights and intuitions.

Dhammarati: You wouldn't accept the sutras suggestion that this was the fuller teaching now being made explicit?

S: Well it is fuller in relation to the classical Hinayana and the classical Hinayana doesn't necessarily coincide with certain teachings of the historical Buddha as recorded in at least some parts of the existing Pali Canon. I don't think that one could say that the Mahayana had gone beyond that. Assuming that to be properly understood.

Tejananda: A question from Padmavajra about the white Lotus Sutra and Sufi and Persian imagery.

Padmavajra: You said that the White Lotus Sutra may well have been written down in central Asia. Whether or not it was written down there how much of central Asian influence is evident in the sutra, in terms of its cosmology and even spiritual content?

S: I think probably one has to ask that question in much more general terms. Ask it with regards to Mahayana sutras in general. Ask it perhaps more particularly with regard to the Sukhavati-vyuha sutras. Because it has been suggested that the concept of Amitabha does owe something to Iranian influences. And even the idea of that Pure Land. There are sort of anticipations of the pure land, anticipations of the jewel trees of the pure lands in the Pali sutras, in the Digha Nikaya for instance. And it would seem that it is very likely that sort of conception of jewel trees in magnificent gardens is of, I won't say central Asian origin, I think it is possibly of Babylonian origin. This is something I have started going into but I don't have much information as yet. So I don't think one can ask that question with reference so much to the White Lotus Sutra itself, as to Mahayana sutras in general, Mahayana imagery in general, particularly as embodied in the Sukhavati-vyuha sutras. The whole concept of the Pure land and its particular kind of ornamentation and above all with regard to those jewel trees.

Padmavajra: So it would be more in its imagery rather than

anything to do with its spiritual content?

S: I don't think it would be anything to do with doctrine. More with regard to imagery, especially light imagery and the imagery of the jewel trees. They can be paralleled elsewhere.

V: You said Bhante, that jewel trees are found in the Digha Nikaya, are you implying that there is influence there?

S: Yes, I have a theory about that which I haven't yet developed. I have made some notes. We know that Asoka was in contact with Persia, with the Persian empire. We know that Persian artisans came to ( ? ) because those highly polished columns, it would seem, could only have been produced by Persian craftsmen. And also Asoka's palace, from the descriptions we have seemed to have been modeled on that of Persepolis and even the perhaps the idea of the inscriptions came from the Persian empire. Derius? the Great~~~hat we call with regard to Asoka's rock edicts in various places. So it could be that the kingdom of Magadha was influenced by the Persian empire. I think it is quite possible that some of the later, more as it were legendary suttas in even the Digha Nikaya belong to that period, a hundred years after the Buddha and reflect those sort of influences in their images. Again this is something that I began two or three years ago to collect information about, I have not been able to go into it very deeply but I hope to some day.

V: It does seem from what you have got that there was an independent origination. It wasn't there in the tradition prior to the contact with Persian influences.

S: It would seem not. It doesn't seem to be Indian, it doesn't seem to be Vedic.

Padmavajra: Just a point on that. Do you think that the Buddha was actually emerging out of or in contact with a completely different trend within Indian culture, which was not ...

S: Well that is quite possible. It is quite possible that there was a trend in Indian culture, broadly that described as sramanic as distinct from brahminic which had connections with Babylonia. And of course Babylonia subsequently became part of the Persian Empire.

V: So the sramanas weren't just people who left home, they were actually a quite definite non-brahmanic culture?

S: The culture, in the present state of our knowledge at least, does seem to have been predominantly what we would call monastic, though monastic isn't perhaps a very good word. The Jains are part of this sramanic tradition too, they preserve certain features of it. Especially in their cosmology which to some extent resembles that of Buddhism. Both are quite different from the Vedic cosmology. Anyway this is a bit peripheral perhaps and we have all those questions to get through, to, or at least some of them.

Tejananda: A question from Abhaya about the ray of light which appears from the Buddha and goes to the Eastern quarter.

Abhaya: What is the significance of the ray of light from between the Buddha's eyebrows in Chapter 1 illuminating only the Eastern region, as this is the drama of cosmic Enlightenment?

S: I suppose, this is just something that occurs to me at the moment, that it is because things start in the East. Light originates from the East. When one enumerates one always enumerates, I think in Buddhist texts, East, South, West, North. And when you organise the mandala, when you enter the mandala you enter it from the East. The Eastern gate of the mandala is the gate which faces you. So that you have the Southern gate on you left, the Northern gate on your right and the Western way back in front of you, the Eastern gate directly in front of you. So I imagine that the light ray goes to the East to suggest the source of light. But this is just what occurs to me at the moment. I'd have to think more about that, have to study the text. I hadn't thought of it before. Maybe I took it in a rather matter of fact way, that's how it's written and the light ray went to the East. There maybe some other reason but I can't think of it at the moment.

Abhaya: It seems strange that it was restricted to the East, why didn't it go around all the other quarters, in all directions of space. It seems quite arbitrary.

S: The only possibility I can think of is that there is some connection with Akshobhya, one could look into that.

Tejanada: Another question from Padmavajra on the development of the Trikaya doctrine in relation to the White Lotus Sutra.

Padmavajra: This has two parts. How radical an idea would that of an internal Buddha have been when it emerged~ And what sort of stage of development would the Trikaya doctrine have reached at the time of the White Lotus Sutra?

S: Well even in the Pali Canon we have the distinction of The Rupakaya of the Buddha and the Dharmakaya. In the Theravada the Dharmakaya is understood rather literalistically - the Buddha is the Dharmakaya because he is the embodiment of all the teachings contained in the Tripitika. Though the term Dharmakaya does occur in the Pali Canon it is not interpreted, so to speak, metaphysically by the Theravadins but in a rather narrow fashion one might say. So it is not that before the time of the Saddharma-pundarika sutra the concept of the dharmakaya as distinct from a Rupakaya was unknown. It seems to have been a part of general Buddhist teaching. But certainly the Saddharma-pundarika Sutra, the White Lotus Sutra brought it into prominence and placed it at the centre of the teaching. That it was of the greatest of importance to see that the Buddha was the Dharmakaya in the fullest sense and not just the Rupakaya. That the Dharmakaya was the Buddha rather than

Rupakaya. With regard to the development of the Trijaya doctrine, that seems to have emerged in, so to speak, later Mahayana sutras. In the earlier Mahayana sutras the distinction remains between Rupakaya and Dharmakaya, there is no mention of a Sambhogakaya, Though sometimes what came to be called Sambhogakaya sort of shades of into Dharmakaya and vice versa, but there is no sharp differentiation as there came to be later in the Trikaya doctrine, which is associated of course with the Yogachara. In the Madhyamika as such there is only a two kaya doctrine. The Trikaya doctrine is, one might say, distinctively Yogacharin, but subsequently of course they became sort of amalgamated.

Padmavajra: Because in the White Lotus Sutra it is almost as if the eternal Buddha is both, in awa~, Sambhogakaya and Dharmakaya.

S: Yes. Because if you are going to have the Buddha acting in a drama of cosmic Enlightenment you can hardly have a sort of featureless Dharmakaya, if he is to be an actor at all, to appear at all, to speak at all, he has to have a form. So in that way you arrive at a sort of Sambhogakaya type presentation of the Buddha, though in fact that Buddha is the Dharmakaya. Perhaps it isn't advisable to distinguish too sharply between the three kayas, I have gone into this at the beginning of the three jewels. Anyway, let's move on.

Tejananda: A question from Prakasha about the three yanas as progressive levels.

Prakasha: As re~ards the three vehicles culminating in the one Buddha vehicle. To what extent is this principle of progressive levels unique to the sutra? Is it found earlier? Is it more the application of the princ~le in terms of the progressive series culminating in the Bodhisattva that is new and unique?

S: Let's go through that again, bit by bit.

Prakasha: As regards the three vehicles culminating in the one Buddha vehicle. To what extent is this principle of progressive levels unique to the sutra? Is it found earlier?

S: I don't think it is so much a question of levels. it is a definite question of yanas. What are thought of as different ways with different goals are in fact one way, they all merge into one way. Perhaps you can regard them as succesive stages of one path, but still you are concerned with succesive stages of one path, the emphasis is on the one path. Reducing all the apparantly different paths to one path, one yana. I think that is the distinctive feature of that first path, so to speak, of the sutra. I think that is one of its two really distinctive teachings and afterwards became the heritage of the whole of the Mahayana movement.

Prakasha: Was that teaching found before the White Lotus Sutra?

S: Well in a sense the question doesn't arise because The situation before the rise of the White Lotus Sutra was one in which the original distinction (not originally original but relatively original) between the Arahant and the Buddha sort of hardened into separate paths. A path for the Buddha, a path for the Arahant and of course a path for the Pratyekabuddha. So the White Lotus Sutra was an expression of, so to speak, a reaction against all that, a bringing of them all together again into one path. So in the time of the Buddha you had one path and then that split up into three paths with three different goals and then one of the functions of the Mahayana, as embodied especially in the White Lotus Sutra, was to bring them all back together again. We do this in a certain way, on a certain level with regard to..., in the way in which we bring together the lay and the monastic into the one going for refuge. Because we feel that they have got too far separated, too widely separated.

Tejananda: Now a question from me. Why do you say in the talk that the Sravakayana is more negative than the Pratyekabuddha yana?

S: Because I think the traditional Hinayana view is that The Arahant merely removes the asravas, merely removes the defilements and gains Nirvana in that way. Whereas in the case of the Pratyekabuddha there is some element of higher knowledge and insight. I am not quite sure it's exactly that which I had in mind but that is roughly the position. I haven't expressed it fully in technical terms but that, as far as I recollect is roughly the position.

(end of tape 3)

... realises only the Four Noble Truths whereas the Pratyekabuddha in addition realises the Pratitya-samutpada. But that is not quite the same distinction. I think what I had in mind was the general Hinayana tradition, so far as I remember, that the Arahant is one who eradicates the defilements but the Pratyekabuddha is one who in addition has some realisation of Bodhi.

Abhaya: That relates to a question I was going to ask, you could answer it now. This concept of the Hinayana Nirvana's eradication of the passions with insight. The way it comes across in the lecture, you mention it twice, it is as if that is the actual case, there was such a goal. How could that be possible, where you could eradicate all passions without developing insight? Do you see that possibility?

S: I don't, actually. Though that may be the emphasis, That one thinks just in terms of eradication the passions but if you actually were to do that, even though you didn't think in terms of gaining Bodhi you must gain Bodhi. It's just your mode of expression is limited. But there is no doubt that in the Pali Canon for instance, Sariputra is asked in one passage to say what is Nibbana and he says it's the cessation of lobha, dosa and moha. He gives no positive content to that at all. So here, at least in terms of



expression, is a purely negative definition of Nibbana. Though other passages in the same Pali Canon tell a somewhat different story. I think that one has to recognise that in the path, in the case of the path and therefore in the case of 'Nirvana' (single inverted commas) there is always a negative aspect and a positive aspect. At least with regard to the intermediate stages of the path, that there is a cessation of something unskilful and a coming into existence and an increase of something skilful. When you get onto the spiral then apparently it's more and more positive than it is negative. It's more and more the gradual increase of the positive, the skilful, because the positive and skilful by that time so far overbalance or counterbalances the negative and the unskilful. Thinking of extending that, maybe if one thinks of Nirvana, well yes it is the cessation of everything unskilful but it is also the plenitude of everything skilful. The Hinayana often left out the second part of the statement, perhaps without intending to but they certainly concentrated, it would seem, much more on the cessation of the unskilful.

Cittapala: Why should they have done that if they were genuinely, they had genuine spiritual attainments? Would that have been some sort of skilful means or something?

S: That's just an argument in a circle because you are assuming that they had some genuine spiritual attainment, perhaps they didn't. Perhaps there had been a deterioration in certain cases and on that account they thought just in negative terms. There may have been other reasons, because we know so little about the general historical situation and social and cultural conditions. It is very difficult to speculate but the fact is that in the case of, well we'll say the Hinayana but certainly in the case of the Theravada their presentation of the Dharma came to be in increasingly negative terms to the neglect, even right down to the present day, of much more positive formulations of the Dharma found in the Pali Canon itself. A classic example, almost, is that of the Twelve Positive Nidanas. Who even took any notice of these or mentioned them in expositions of the Dharma until the time of Mrs Rhys-Davids and Benemotapala. It seems extraordinary. And when we studied the Itivuttaka we found it, even towards the end really tailing off into increasing negativity. An increasingly negative presentation of the spiritual life and the goal of the spiritual life, it is very noticeable. The latter sections of the Itivuttaka being apparently later productions. But it is quite a question why that happens. We know, it's obvious that it did happen but the psychological, the spiritual, the social, the cultural perhaps, reasons why it happened, we are quite in the dark about.

Tejananda: Now I have a question on behalf of Ratnaprabha about the three yantras. The Buddha says that he had preached the three yantras because of temperamental differences in his disciples. The FWBO however teaches, 'Ekayana Buddhism'. Should we be taking more account of temperamental differences between people and systematically offer different types of facilities and teaching programmes for the main temperament 'classes' of people? (I don't mean

starting with Hinayana style and then moving on.)

S: I am not sure that you could do this on the basis of temperament. I think you could do it on certain other bases perhaps. We do it already, because we have special study groups for Mitras, we have beginners retreats so in principle we are already doing this. Perhaps we could extend it. Perhaps we could extend it to different occupational and social groups. Perhaps have afternoon or lunchtime meditation classes for office workers, or something else for factory workers at an appropriate time. Or something of special interest to teachers where you would aim to get along just teachers. We could certainly orient our activities to specific groups, this might be a more skilful way of doing things. I think it could be considered. In principle, to a limited extent we do this already but I doubt if we could do it on the basis of temperament. I doubt whether that would be desirable. I don't think it would be desirable to have special classes for devotional people with lots of pujas and special classes for intellectuals with lots of study of the Abhidharma. No, I think that would encourage them in their one-sidedness.

Tejananda: Perhaps he meant the opposite, we should have devotional classes for the intellectuals.

S: Perhaps he did, yes. It's not so easy to get the intellectuals to come along to the pujas and things.

Tejananda: A question from Tejamitra on the Arahant walkout.

Tejamitra: At the beginning of the sutra five thousand Arahants walk out and the assembly is thus purified. Could you explain the mechanics of this. Why couldn't the Buddha reach to the whole assembly and thereby contact those who were in the assembly who were receptive and not contacting those who weren't receptive?

S: I think one has to consider what the sutra is trying to do. It is a drama, so in a drama there has to be action and I think the author of the sutra wanted to dramatise the Arahants rejection of the truth that was offered to them. He wanted to emphasise, this is what happened, or this is what can happen. You can reject even what the Buddha says. You can be so full of your own imagined spiritual attainments that you even close your ears to what the Buddha has to say and even walk out. I think this is the lesson which is being inculcated here. So because this lesson is being inculcated some other lesson obviously isn't being inculcated. It is a question of a particular lesson that the author of the sutra wants to inculcate at a particular moment, in a particular episode in the sutra. No doubt the Buddha could have perhaps restrained them, or perhaps not. But even if he had it would be that that particular point would not have been underlined in that dramatic way. But perhaps also the point that is being made is that you can close your ears even to the Buddha. You can refuse to accept the Buddha's teaching. As a human being you have that freedom and some people do exercise that freedom unfortunately.

Dhammarati: We were wondering in our group actually that it was having people in the assembly, if it affected the person who has doing the teaching. Padmavajra for instance was talking about a course that he did where he had people within the course very resistant to what he was saying and how difficult it was to teach against that. We wondered if there was a factor, an awareness from the Buddha's point of view that if there were people not receptive it is harder to teach.

S: We~l of course. Harder to teach them or harder to teach generally?

Dhammarati: Harder to teach generally.

S: Yes, because the fact that there are certain people in a group, whether large or small who are resistance, especially if there are enough of them, does affect the atmosphere of the whole group. And if you speaking to a group you can't ignore any important section of that group, if that section is in disagreement with the rest of the group. If for instance you are giving a talk and three quarters of the audience is very attentive, and one quarter is markedly inattentive and restless that does affect you. Because it interferes with the total empathy between you and your audience.

V: It seems as if even one can do that.

S: Sometimes even one person, yes.

V. Even in a big assembly. Thinking of The Udana.

S: Yes. I can remember in the case of one particular Theture I gave in a series, one particular person was sitting right in the middle, four or five rows back and throw0h out the lecture he was yawning every minute or two. So one couldn't help noticing that.

Tejananda: A question from Mahamati about your reference to the inner Ananda.

Mahamati: In the lecture you suggest that the speaker of the sutra as well as being the historical Ananda more esoterically it could be said to be the Ananda within.

S: Well in a sense Ananda is the exemplary Sravaka, The hearer. He says, 'thus have I~eard'.

Mahamati: What I wondered, I got a bit carried away. whether in a sense this means that we have heard the White Lotus Sutra before because it is like an innate memory. The connection between Ananda as being the one who remembers, its like it is our innate memor of the White Lotus Sutra.

S: Are you thinking of the Platonic doctrine of reminiscence?

Mahamati: Well I might be. (laughter)

S: One can also look at it in the sense of mutual inter-penetration. Yes, well perhaps it isn't too far fetched. In other words one is almost saying that there is within oneself a level of receptivity on which you are, as it were, listening to the truth represented by that sutra. This is what it really means, isn't it.

Dhammarati: A brief point in relation to Mahamati's question. The idea of a Buddha in your own mind, the corollary of that is the Buddha teaching within your own mind. And I wondered given your reservations about any suggestion that you are already a Buddha, the Buddha nature within you. Do you think this is a useful image then?

S: I think to use with caution, yes. But bearing in mind everything that I said about the limitations of that static, as it were, way of looking at things.

Tejananda: A question from me pertaining to that area. In the talk you speak of the Enlightened Mind within. Could you please clarify this phrase for the sake of people in study groups that I will be taking - what exactly your implications are in this phrase.

S: I think really I would like to avoid this phrase as much as possible. I think it can be misleading. I think you should warn study groups that it isn't to be taken literally. That a human being is, so to speak, a potential Buddha, but to say that only means that if the human being makes a sufficient effort he or she can attain Enlightenment. It doesn't mean that you are already Buddha in the sense that there is just a thin layer just separating you from that and you have just got to get through that layer and hey presto there you are, you are Enlightened. You can point out the danger of this way of thinking and certainly one shouldn't think of that, so to speak, immanent Buddhahood is something which is the possession of you, considered as an ego. And I have sometimes mentioned that the Buddha himself, as far as we can tell, didn't use this language of potentiality. It is a language that developed later. I am very doubtful whether for us it is a skilful language to use. Certainly in discussing the Dharma with, well not only relative new-comers but with anybody who isn't really spiritually quite advanced and therefore not likely to misunderstand.

V: In a way this isn't even language of potentiality, it is more actuality rather than potentiality.

S: I meant of potentiality in that sense; you already are a Buddha, i.e. or potentially a Buddha. It is best to spell it out much more clearly and say that if you make a sufficient effort you can eventually attain a state which we call Enlightenment. One can therefore say that potentially you are that but that is not to be interpreted as to mean that you as Mr or Mrs or Miss so-and-so are now literally that in any sense really, any sense that is comprehensible to you.

Dhammarati: The idea of the Ananda within struck quite a chord with me and I wonder, actually, if identifying with Ananda, rather than identifying with the Buddha gets the benefits of that language without some of the risks.

S: Ananda is a more modest figure, as it were, because during the time of his actual association with the Buddha he was only a stream entrant, he wasn't fully Enlightened. So perhaps you can much more safely identify with Ananda, or think of the Ananda within that the Buddha.

V: Where did the language of potentiality arise, where did it come from?

S: Of course it is a language which is used in India outside Buddhism. It is in a way the language of the Upanishads. Whether the Upanishads had a historical influence on Buddhism, on the Mahayana, it is difficult to say, in any case it would probably be the later Upanishads even so. One Upanishad says ( ? ) - that art thou... ( ? ) - I am Brahman, I am the absolute. There is that direct identification. It could be that that language was influenced by the language or even the thoughts of the Upanishads or it could be that it was perhaps a parallel development. Or it might have been a quite independent development on the part of the Mahayana for reasons that we are not aware of.

Padmavajra: Do you think if somebody who was really making a tremendous effort in their practice should stop making an effort. I don't mean us but somebody who has been practising for a long time, just to be told just to be receptive to that might actually... be receptive to the Buddha within might be a way of speaking, a way of helping.

S: Even to say that you should be receptive to the Buddha within doesn't amount to direct identification as you sometimes get say in Ch'an or Zen. That you are that, thou art Buddha. I was also going to say that language of potentiality as I have called it, or even of actuality, is not without its own validity, because no doubt it does express an actual spiritual experience at a certain level. But that sort of language can be certainly misunderstood by those who are not on that particular level of spiritual experience and can not only be misunderstood but misused, misapplied.

Tejananda: Now a question from Tejamitra about the significance of the prediction to Enlightenment.

Tejamitra: Almost throughout the sutra Arahants etc. receive predictions of their future Buddhahood. Could you say what the significance of this is?

S: I have gone into this one some other occasion. When did V do this?

V's: I think it was on the last series.

S: I think I will skip that one then, because we don't have too much time. And refer whoever is interested to what I said then.

Tejananda: Prakasha has a question on the same topic.

Prakasha: In the Sutra Arahants such as Sariputra, numerous bhikkhus, bhikkhunis like Mahaprajapati and Yashoda, evil doers such as Devadatta and young women such as a Naga princess are predicted to enlightenment. But as far as I can remember no lay people are. Why is this and was this deficit the reason for the emphasis on lay people in the Vimalakirti Nirdeśha?

S: That is an interesting thought. Because one would have thought in view of the universalism of the Mahayana that lay men and lay women also would be predicted to Enlightenment. It is a rather odd omission in a way. Perhaps as you say the Vimalakirti makes up for that, not that this was, as it were a conscious thing. Perhaps it is a question of particular Mahayana sutras having their particular fields of responsibility, their particular subject matter or their responsibility for a particular kind of approach or emphasis. But even so it is a little odd that the laity aren't even mentioned. Perhaps one could, if one was really interested, go into all the different texts and see whether perhaps anything has been dropped out. Another thing that occurs to me as well - who else is mentioned?

Prakasha: Devadatta.

S: Yes, but are any gods mentioned.

Prakasha: A Naga princess.

S: Because gods and goddesses would be technically lay people. (laughter) The Naga princess was she actually a serpent princess or a human princess of the Naga tribe, so to speak, do you see what I mean? The Naga <sup>°</sup>kanya it would be in Sanskrit, kanya really means maiden. But it is an interesting point, yes. I am sure the Mahayana doesn't intend deliberately to exclude. But don't forget the Saddharma-pundarika is an early, one of the earlier Mahayana sutras. Some remnants of the Hinayana approach still clings. Perhaps there is still an over emphasis on monasticism which has been carried over from the Hinayana which has not been fully permeated by the Mahayana spirit. And that comes in the later sutras like the Vimalakirti. Perhaps in those days when they enumerated different categories of people they did sometimes omit the lay people because they weren't regarded as involved with the Dharma in the way that the monks were. It's as though the Mahayana author hasn't sort of fully or completely transcended his Hinayana background or his Hinayana starting point. I think one could look at it in that way. It is the same in the case of the FWBO, we have been gradually bringing our attitudes and observances more and more into line with the fundamental spirit of the FWBO and our overall emphasis on the going for refuge as the central act of the Buddhist life. It is not so easy to bring everything that you have inherited from the past, from tradition, into line with your real position.

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Tejananda: Now a question from me. In the sutra the body of the Buddha Abundant

Treasures can't be revealed due to his vow until all the Buddhas who have emanated from Shakyamuni are present. So could you give us any indication of the meaning of this episode. And what exactly are the emanations - are the people who have become Buddhas as disciples of Shakyamuni or are they so to speak magical emanations?

S: To answer the last part first, they are magical emanations. Then with regard to the first part, the Prabhutaratna is the ancient Buddha, as it is translated, I think that is probably Adhi Buddha. So that this sort of coming together of the ancient Buddha and the modern Buddha, so to speak, the present Buddha called Shakyamuni here though it isn't the historical Shakyamuni, represents one might say Enlightenment's transcendence of time. And the coming together of the Bodhisattvas from all directions of space into one spot is the corresponding transcendence of space. You are beginning to go beyond time and space, I think that is the significance of that episode.

V: Would one be right in thinking that when that episode occurs, Shakyamuni actually purifies the whole world and it turns into a lapis lazuli floor with golden chords, at that point have we gone up even to a higher level, have we entered a sort of Sukhavati?

S: I think it is more a question of feeling than of, as it were, doctrine. As you read the sutra what do you feel? Do you feel as though you are rising to a higher level? Later on there is that episode where the Buddha does raise the whole assembly, literally, to a higher level, and you can't miss the symbolism there. But as you go through the sutra you must be mindful and examine your own responses. Do you feel uplifted by a certain passage, does it seem to raise you to a higher level of experience by whatever means. Sometimes the sutra does it in a more obvious manner, sometimes in a more subtle manner. You must consult your own experience and your own response.

Tejananda: Ratnaguna has a question on the Buddha Saddha paribhuta.

Ratnaguna: It's simply that you translate his name as 'Never Direct' whereas in this sutra it is 'Never Despise' and in another one, I don't know the actual sutra, it's 'Never Disparage'. They seem to be very different translations.

S: 'Never Direct' is the literal translation. It isn't Thaddha prarudita though is it, that's 'Ever Weeping's

V: I was just having a quick look to see. Bhuda.

S: Saddha prarudita is Ever Weeping.

V: No this is Saddha paribhuta.

S: I think I did look this up, I did check it.

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It is definitely 'Never Direct'. But there is an implication, if you direct someone you are

always telling them what to do, in a way you are looking down on them. You are treating them as in need of direction like a lot of sheep. So you are despising them, so perhaps that is the connotation of the term, but the denotation, one might say, is definitely not directing.

Tejananda: The final question is from Prakasha, about mutual interpenetration in the White Lotus Sutra.

Prakasha: Towards the end of the sutra there are pure lands and magnificent fantasmagoria. In the lecture you use the term 'mutual interpenetration', but is this term actually applicable in describing these events?

S: I am not sure, I would have to consult the sutra again. I must have felt that it was at least to some extent at the time that I gave the lecture. But I doubt, as far as I recollect, that it is applicable in anything except a quite limited sense.

Prakasha: Because they do seem to suggest that one thing is reflected in another. It is much more just a description of pure land and ...

S: Yes, and Bodhisattvas arriving. Perhaps I was going a little beyond my brief, just got a bit carried away. Anyway, do people feel that they are getting more deeply into the sutra and into the lectures? (V's Yes) I really did feel at the time very strongly that White Lotus Sutra did represent a drama of cosmic Enlightenment. I believe I have already so described it in what was then 'The Word of The Buddha', and what became subsequently The Eternal Legacy.

Kulam~tra: I was very struck by how closely your description in the lecture parallels the description in The Eternal Legacy. Did you actually use one in reference to the other, or was it just because you know the material very well?

S: I can't remember, I'm afraid. I certainly at the time that I wrote that part of the Eternal Legacy, which was in Kalimpong, I certainly absorbed myself in the material quite deeply and was very, very much affected by that sutra. I think incidentally when you are writing about something you immerse yourself in it to a far greater extent, perhaps, than in any other way. Especially when it is something quite lengthy and perhaps you are writing something quite substantial about it. I really would suggest that if you really want to immerse yourself in a particular text, well write something about it. You really do then have to study it closely in a way that perhaps you would not otherwise study it. I am experiencing this at the moment to some extent with regard to the booklet I am writing on Ambedkar and Buddhism, because I am having to immerse myself in his biography and nearly all his writings to a very considerable extent. And I spend a good part of the day thinking about them and concentrating on them quite intensely, and that does have a definite effect on one. One gets to know the material, having to write about it and check this reference and that reference and this quotation and that quotation. One gets to know the material in a way that one

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I think couldn't perhaps in any other way. Except possibly if you were teaching it to different groups of students over a longer period. So I really do recommend that. It would be good if there were more people writing about sutras and their own study of particular sutras. What they got out of them, what they meant to them, concentrating on particular teachings, particular doctrines; those who are so inclined. It is much the same, I used to find and no doubt some of you have found this already, giving the courses of lectures themselves. I remember especially with regard to the Vimila-kirti Nirdeśa series that I really did immerse myself in that material over the two month period that I was giving the talks. It was quite difficult to get away from it in a way, one didn't want to leave it because one was immersed in it so deeply. I think that it is a very good way of getting to know a sutra or any text, lecturing on it or writing about it. You really have to get down to studying it then. Whereas sometimes you just read and it doesn't really sink in, you miss all sorts of things, you don't notice things. If you study closely you might even detect all sorts of discrepancies, or apparent discrepancies may set you thinking and because you are set thinking you start entering more deeply into the meaning of the text. 'Is it a discrepancy or is it something I haven't really been able to understand?' You have to get to the bottom of this. Here is something a bit off the track, I'll conclude with this, it has some relevance. I was reading a little while ago a translation of one of the tragedies of Racine the French dramatist, and the plot was laid in imperial Rome. There was a sort of anachronism or discrepancy because Racine mentions the consuls as coming to Titus, coming to see Titus, the emperor - or who was just about to become emperor, perhaps it was before he became emperor. So it was pointed out at the time that that was a discrepancy because in that particular year Titus was himself one of the consuls. But, again it was pointed out that what Racine wanted to do was produce an effect of all the people of Rome, all the different classes, all the different powers and authorities of Rome all coming to Titus and he couldn't exclude the consuls, he knew perfectly well that Titus was one of the consuls in that year but he deliberately disregarded that fact for the sake of his dramatic effect. So if you merely thought that Racine had nodded, like Homer, had made a mistake you would be wrong. If you read more deeply into the work, its dramatic structure, what Racine was trying to do then you would understand that he had done that deliberately. He has sacrificed historical or even archeological correctness to his artistic requirements. Or subordinated them to the artistic requirements of his drama. Because he was a dramatist he wasn't a historian or an archeologist and it wasn't such a big point, he could afford to be inaccurate for the sake of his effect. But if you just made a shallow study of Racine with a little bit of knowledge about ancient Roman history and manners and customs you would just think he had made a mistake and leave it at that. Alright, let's leave it there.

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cTe-ainngndae: Tonight, Bhante, we have questions on ~hreañfi;st one is from Abhaya on the subject of motivation.

Abhaya: The children eventually leave the burning house not on account of fear of burning but because they are strongly attracted to the playthings outside, or beyond. This led us to a discussion on motivation, or rather lack of motivation amongst people in the Movement. A lot of people remain unmotivated in spite of the spiritual attractions offered in the FWBO. We concluded this was not so much because they are so intimately involved with lesser attractions but because they seem apathetic and understimulated. Three questions, 1. Do you agree? 2. How do you account for this lack in involvement? and 3. What do you think we should do about it?

S: Let's just go through that little by little, starting with your little preface.

Abhaya: The children eventually leave the burning house not on account of fear of burning but because they are strongly attracted to the playthings outside.

S: Yes, they don't realise that the house is on fire, don't even see the flames, it would seem.

Abhaya: This led us to a discussion on motivation, or rather lack of motivation amongst people in the Movement. A lot of people remain unmotivated in spite of the spiritual attractions offered in the FWBO.

S: Some do, yes.

Abhaya: We concluded this was not so much because they are so intimately involved in lesser attractions but because they seem apathetic and understimulated.

S: Apathetic and understimulated? One certainly does get that impression though I hasten to add that we must delimit the field of enquiry. For instance, one certainly doesn't see this in India. One sees it mainly in the UK and in some parts of the UK, I am talking of other movements now, more than others. I think with regard to this country as a whole I sometimes get the impression, but again my personal contacts are so limited I can't be sure, I sometimes get the impression that there is quite a bit of apathy and lack of stimulation in the population at large. I think that may be due to mainly historical factors. I think that the fact that certainly within my life time and perhaps within your life time to some extent, Britain lost its empire. I think that has had quite a profound effect on, let us say the national psyche. Also the British economy is not expanding. In India the economy is expanding so there is a general feeling of growth and expansion. People feel that they can improve their lot, there is that possibility, perhaps they can improve it even quite dramatically. That is not to say for instance that the standard of living in India is higher than it is in Britain, it certainly isn't, it's very, very much lower, but they are moving from a very low level towards a slightly higher level quite rapidly. So even though we do occupy

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a higher level in that respect they have a much greater sense of growth and development in their national life, especially their economic life. Do you see what I am getting at? And I think that sort of feeling, that sort of sense communicates itself to almost every aspect of life.

I think that is almost entirely lacking in this country, this is the general impression I form. It could be present, perhaps, in certain areas that I am just not in contact with, I am quite sure there are certain individuals that are highly motivated perhaps there are certain organizations, cert~in business firms, even certain politicians are highly motivated - perhaps not always skilfully - but there is a certain amount of motivation. We are presumably, in the context of the FWBO thinking more in terms of lack of skilful motivation. I must say I have been sometimes rather puzzled by this. A lot of people seem to have a very passive and dependent attitude. It might have something to do with the welfare state set up, this could in the long run prove to have been a curse rather than a blessing. Perhaps people have a feeling of expecting almost to be spoon fed with spiritual experiences and so on, without much effort on their part. In India amongst our ex-Untouchable friends they know from hard experience that you don't get anything without working very hard for it and they carry that attitude over into their Buddhist life. But in this country, especially in the case of younger people, our experience is that you get quite a lot without having made any effort at all. When you are born into a quite comfortable well off family you are spoon fed, you go to school, you go to college. In India, still, you usually have to work hard to send your children to school or college, even if your children are going to a primary school you have to buy their exercise books, their text books, you have to buy their stationary, you have to buy their pens and ink and everything, nothing is provided free as in this country. We grumble quite a lot about what we are not being provided with as though it is our right to be provided; well perhaps in a sense it is but there is another side to the story. And when we grow up and we can't get a job we don't starve we just go on the dole, we don't have to make any effort at all. Some people even grumble that they have to go and sign on once a week! I mean, in India people wouldn't grumble if they had to walk twenty miles to draw money for the week, they would be only too happy to walk that twenty miles. But we grumble if we have to jump onto a bus or get into our car and drive off to whatever you call these places, and you draw what is due to us. We usually grumble because it isn't enough or it's not enough for us to be able to have plenty of holidays abroad, things like that. So I think this all encourages a sluggish attitude in us, a rather dependent and passive attitude, not an enterprising, energetic, pioneering spirit in the least. There are many exceptions, no doubt, maybe some people would make full use of these opportunities, but a lot just don't do that. And that applies to some extent to the FWBO in this country. Something of the general attitude, the general ethos rubs off onto us and I think we have to make a conscious effort to resist that. This is one of the reasons why I have been rather emphasising recently that people should try to get off the dole. I think Vajraketu quite rightly emphasised ( ? ) don't look to the Movement to provide you with support so that you can come off the dole, it is your responsibility. Otherwise instead of looking to the

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government people just start looking to The Movement, a nice abstract sort of word with a capital M which will do it all for you, but that isn't going to be the case. Initially you have to take responsibility for yourself, maybe get together with a few of your friends in the Order or Order Members and Mitras and set up something or else just go and get a job which is as fully in accordance with the principles of Right Livelihood as you can get. They are just a few general remarks, they don't really go very deeply into the matter. I think it requires a proper sociological analysis. Have any people got any comments? Oh yes, some people

have.

Cittapala: I was noticing that Subhuti in commenting about requirements for Ordination was saying that he felt that a showing of the ability to take more initiative and outward goingness in that respect was something which we should be looking for in prospective Order Members. Have you got any feelings on that, on how one should go about looking for that sort of ...?

S: I don't think its a very difficult thing, its pretty obvious usually if someone is outward going and has a spirit of enterprise and all that kind of thing. On the other hand one often notices its absence. One doesn't want to require of someone that they are outward going in a superficial social sense. Someone may be comparatively quiet, maybe deep, as it were, but that doesn't mean that they are not really outward going. Some people are outward going in a purely social sense just as a means of escaping from themselves, one doesn't want to encourage that. I think what one is basically looking for is people with among other things a strong sense of responsibility. I think this is what it amounts to. Responsibility is an aspect of individuality and it is that aspect which is relevent here. Because if you are really responsible, well you will be able to go out if going out seems to be necessary.

Cittapala: He seemed to be implying that the Tuscany process was too, well perhaps not too, that may be the wrong emphasis, but that there wan't enough emphasis on encouraging that sort of quality of taking initiative. That there was in a way, almost, too much done for Mitras in that context.

S: I wouldn't say that, because people as you know have to Wo study, they have to give talks and after all it is a retreat. You are not encouraging people to go out, in a sense, that i5 the nature of the situation, they retreat so that later on they can go forward. Some of the people who go to Tuscany, Mitras and Order Members alike have been quite outward going immediately before going to Tuscany, especially Order Members who have been helping to run centres. But perhaps there could be more of a reminder in the course of the pre-Ordination retreat about that aspect of individuality. I think people really shouldn't get to Tuscany unless there is some element of responsibility developed. That's one of the reasons that I think that on the whole people shouldn't go to Tuscany without some experience of more than one centre. Otherwise there is the possibility that they over identify with that centre, stick with it, want to go back to it, aren't really venturing our from it because they feel safe and protected there. So I think it is very difficult

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to know if a potential Order Member really has that sense of responsibility and is able to take initiative and all that, if he has never known more than one FWBO centre or community.

Dhammarati: You were saying that Vajraketu was encouraging Order Members to come of f the dole and go out and work - you are suggesting that people should take responsibility ...

S: No, I think he wasn't necessarily encouraging them to go out and work he was making the point that we shouldn't be dependent so much on the dole. And I think he would certainly prefer, from what I remember, that those who were on the dole to join existing FWBO businesses or get together and set up more such businesses themselves. Or find some other means of supporting themselves, perhaps qualifying themselves so that they could take evening classes, say for the City Lit and support themselves in that way.

Dhammarati: The point I was going to make was if we take that idea seriously around the LBC, for instance, of the co-ops, that the co-ops don't generate such a surplus that it would support the centre team, so that effectively all the people who work full time in the centre - and it does seem to be full time work for six or seven people - all of them I think are on the dole. And if you take this idea seriously it would mean doing away more or less with that full time staff and their efforts would go ...

S: I don't think Vajraketu meant that everybody should at once sign off but certainly one by one people should aim at coming off the dole.

Dhammarati: But would you say that that was such a priority that the way of organizing people's time and effort around the LBC should shift to becoming self supporting rather than accepting that ...

S: A lot of emphasis and a lot of attention should be given to that. It should be quite a high priority. I wouldn't say that its so high and so immediate that all those who are on the dole should come off it immediately. But on the other hand if one emphasises that too much people will say 'There's no hurry, we'll do it later on's, and nothing changes. I think one needs to see what can be done to ma~~ the co-ops more succesful in financial terms. And one has to see whether one or two people at least who have high earning capacity couldn't go out to work and support two or three people. Normally a man would reckon on supporting a wife and one or two children, so couldn't you support one or two Order Members. Even Mitras be encouraged to do that in some cases.

Kulamitra: Bhante, I think there might be some confusion because the way you rendered Vajraketu's statement was that he was encouraging people to look outside the Movement for that support. But as I understand it the people who are working full time within the Movement, it is more a question of taking responsibility for how that will be sorted out in that context. In other words not that people should stop working for the Movement directly, and have to form a right livelihood business, but that there was an element of personal responsibility.

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S: Yes. He made that point that there were some Wusinesses that were short of workers, and at the same time there were people on the dole.

Padmavajra: Do you think there is perhaps in the Movement in this country a certain amount

of preciousness with regard to..., about the amount of time. Well, put it like this - in India you find people who have family responsibilities, who are holding down full time jobs, who are intensely involved on an almost nightly basis with Dharma activities. I wonder if there isn't a certain amount of preciousness in this business about having full time people in running our Movement. I wonder if there isn't..., if people actually could do a lot more than they are doing in that sense.

S: I think there is something in that, though I would certainly think we need a lot of full time people. (P: Yes) I just shudder to think what would happen in the Order Office if I had to depend on part time people however hard working and capable they were. I think one of the wrong attitudes that bedevils the situation is the attitude of wanting time to oneself in this precious sort of way and having a private life. Having leisure, time in which you can do what you want to do, what you feel like doing at that particular moment. One doesn't get this attitude in India, people seem to throw themselves into things much more wholeheartedly, and I think usually that is because Buddhism means so much more to them, in their particular situation as ex-Untouchables, than Buddhism usually means to people in this country. There is almost a desperate necessity, here it is a bit of an optional extra, sort of thing. Do you see what I mean? But I think really, Abhaya has asked these questions and I have given some sort of rough and ready reply, don't take it too much as gospel. I think this is a sort of issue that you have got to thrash out among yourselves in your chapters. I think each chapter has got to discuss this issue quite seriously and you have just got to go round saying, 'what are you doing, are you on the dole or are you not on the dole', or 'if you are on the dole what steps are you taking to get off it?' Do you see what I mean? 'Or can we help you to get off it', or 'what could we all do together so we all get off it?' I can give all sorts of theoretical explanations and there may be some truth in some of the things I say, there may not be - it is very difficult to say and obviously I am wildly generalising, I have been asked to generalise. But I think this is one of those issues that has to be really hammered out in the context of your chapter meetings. You have got to really get at one another over this and other issues.

Dhammaloka: You have been giving emphasis to people being on the dole in your answers and I wondered whether there is another aspect of apathy which I seem to experience. I think in a sense I find taking initiative, in a sense I am quite active, but still what I find, being very perhaps ? ) I don't know. I do find quite a strong apathy in many respects to real change. I wonder perhaps that is only my experience, I don't know, but I wonder whether this same does apply to other people as well.

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? ) to response to an objective need, you throw yourself into that but you still remain unchanged in many aspects of yourself. You do it in a certain way, or I do it in a certain way so that it is even a sort of escape from really confronting myself with what I need should I need to change.

S: I think in that sort of situation you just need a lot of help from your spiritual friends. That is to say, normally, other members of your chapter or other members of your co-op assuming that its Order Members ( ? ) or whatever other situation you find yourself in. Because it is quite easy to keep part of oneself back even though you appear to be really

throwing yourself in. YOU can be quite hardworking even but there can be a deeper more obscure part of yourself that is not involved. Indians, I must say, are quite good at total involvement, at least those that we are working with in the WBO there, Order Members and a lot of the Mitras. I am not saying that they don't have some weak points but they don't have this weakness.

Padmavajra: Do you think it is also perhaps the case in this country of the Movement being.., there are too many people. That perhaps j~ too cent~ali~e<1 m& there would be more urgency if there MQyement was more widely spread.

S: I think there is something in this too. I really have been astonished, very pleasantly astonished once or twice recently how much one Order Member do. Look at Aryamitra in Leeds, and when you meet him he doesn't seem sort of worried or hurried, he seems quite casual, quite easy going, but he is doing it alright. He has got a complete centre running and thriving all on his own as an Order Member. And he has got a small team of Mitras now, he has got Friends, and has got things going quite nicely. It is still on a small scale but a definite start has been made. Then there's Pramodana in Accrington who is getting on with things very well there, we are going to have a centre of our own, it seems, in Accrington, quite soon. (V: We've got it) We've got it - you see. And Pramodana has a job, not an outside job, he is now self employed as a window cleaner, he has got his own window cleaning round with one of the women Mitras and (V: He's got a job too) - he's got a job too, and he's got a couple of children to look after because he is separated from his wife. So you see what can be done. So I have sometimes wondered in the past whether it wouldn't be a good idea to sen3every single Order Member off to a different town or city. I really have. Because if you have a lot of them, as you have say in East London, sometimes people say there are so many Order Members, so many people to do things, I don't really need to bother. So I am glad to see Order Members fanning out a bit across the country. I am glad that Windhorse Trading is moving to Cambridge. And I hope Aid for India is going to move sometime. Glad we've got a couple of Order Members in Birmingham. Because we seem to have - though there is a lot that needs to be done in East London I think at the same time, paradoxically we have got too many Order Members there. I think if we had fewer Order Members perhaps more would be done because they would be able to experience themselves to a greater extent and be able to see more clearly who was doing what and who wasn't and what needed to be done, and so on. Becmse if you think about it, I don't know what the exact number of Male and Female Order Members in East London is, but it's a very large number, it might even be forty?

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V: It's more than that, it's over fifty.

S: It's more than fifty! So if you think what fifty Order Members could do, that is twice the number of Order Members that we have got here, that's an enormous number. So perhaps we should think of spreading out a bit more thinly. But anyway, that's just one question, perhaps we should get on to the others. But I go back to thepoint I made you must all thrash such points out in your chapter meetings with one another. That is the only way in which I

think something is going to happen. I also, just a word of warning, take what I say seriously but don't take it seriously in a foolish sort of way. don't go back to your respective centres saying things like 'Bhante says we have got to sign off the dole straight away's. Sometimes people have applied things that I have admittedly said, in a not very sensible way in their zeal to do the right thing. Be sensible at the same time.

Te ananda: A question from Ratnaguna on Mara and the Ma a y ana.

Ratnaguna: I'll just quote you a couple of sections from the chapter of the parable of the burning house, but before it gets to the actual parable. This is Sa~utra, uitealon speech that Sariputra says to the Buddha. 'On first hearing the Buddha's preaching in my mind ~here was fear and doubt lest it might be Mara acting as Buddha, distressing and~confusing my mind'. Then a little bit later he sa 5 'It is the World Honoured One who reaches the truaway, the evil one has no such truths as these. Hence I know for certain that this is not Mara acting as Buddha but because I have fallen into nets of doubts I conceived it as the doing of Mara.' Just readin that toda I wondered if some Hina anists, at least, did accuse the Mahayana as being Mara 5 work, as it were. Because I think Sar~iputra represents the Hlnayana doesn't he?

S:That's true, yes. It is quite possible. It is quite possible That some followers of the Hinayana schools, or one or another of the Hinayana schools didn't merely say that the Mahayana sutras were not Buddhavaccana, they might even have said that they were the work of Mara. We don't have any direct evidence but this could be indirect evidence. But what does that really mean? What sort of person thinks in that sort of way, considering the matter more broadly? Because one is quite right to be concerned that you are opening yourself, so to speak, what is actually the Buddha's teaching. You are quite right to be on your guard against misrepresen- tations of the Buddha's teaching, there is nothing wrong with that. But the type of Hinayanist represented by Sariputra here would seem to be the sort of person who is so desp@rately afraid of not getting it right that he clings on fast to his particular orthodoxy and is very, very closed to any other way of looking at things, even within his own spiritual tradition. And very quick to suspect that some other way of looking at his own tradition even is the work of the devil. this suggests great insecurity. This is the sort of attitude that many people had- in the Western world during the middle ages, and even during

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the reformation period. They were so afraid of falling into heresy, they were so concerned to be completely orthodox Catholics, to such an extent that they sometimes would say, as it were, to the Church, just tell me what to believe, I don't w~lt to get it wrong, just tell me and I will believe it. You get that sort of attitude sometimes among dogmatic Marxists, dogmatic Communists, they are very anxious to follow the exact party line and they are even prepared to change. They will believe one thing one day and another thing the next day as the party line changes because they want to identify themselves, they want to be in the right. So this does suggest great personal insecurity, a lack of faith in one's own powers of judgejment. Perhaps there was an element in the Hinayana and in the Hinayana's attitude to the Maayana.

Tejananda: A question that follows on from that theme is from Ratnaprabha In Chapter Three when Sa riputra receives his prediction to Enlightenment and in the later predictions



the Buddha foretells the duration of what is called the counterfeit Dharma. What does this mean? Does it correspond to anything in our experience in the history of Buddhism or to any real future danger?

S: To the best of my knowledge the counterfeit Dharma is That form of Buddhism in which the outward appearances are kept up whereas the inner spirit is lost. It is very tempting to identify that in a way with the Hinayana, perhaps the Hinayana in some respects or in certain areas did exemplify that but you can certainly get the Mahayana in some cases or in the case of certain people in certain countries just keeping up appearance and losing the spirit. You can get it with Zen, you can get it with any form of Buddhism. So I don't think you can point to any particular period, I think it happened in the case of some people in all periods but perhaps it happened in some periods more than others. Do you see what I am getting at? I think even in our own case there might be times when actually have got what we are practising or following or embodying is a counterfeit Dharma. We are going through the motions but the actual spirit is lacking, and at other times our heart may be really in it and it is the real Dharma then. So it is not a fixed thing. It is akin in a way to the sila (vrata). I don't think you can say that any one particular form of Buddhism represents a counterfeit Dharma. Any individual Buddhist can practise his form of Buddhism in such a way that so far as he is concerned, so far as his life is concerned it is a counterfeit Dharma.

T~anda: Now a question from Dhammarati on skilful means.

Dhammarati: Referring to the incident of the three carts. The Buddha, in the sutra, asks Sariputra has the elder in giving the great carts of the precious substances to his children equally been somewhat guilty of a falsehood? Sariputra replies 'even if the elder did not give them one of the smallest carts, he is still not false. Wherefore? Because that elder from the first formed this intention, I will by tactful means cause my children to escape. For this reason he was not false.' Is this more or less saying that the end justifies the means?

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S: No I don't think it means that at all. I think one has to be very cautious about saying that. Though I was reading recently Wyndham Lewis, he says in one place 'if the end doesn't justify the means then what does?' (Laughter) That's another way of looking at it. I am thinking of the sort of situation in which for instance someone comes along to the centre and they want to learn meditation and they say, 'if I learn meditation will that give you happiness?', and you say, 'yes it will'. So it is not that the centre exists for the sake of making people happy in the limited sense that that person had in mind when they asked the question, but it is not untrue to say that if you practice Buddhism it will make you happy, even in the sense that that person understands that particular term. Buddhism will make you happy, but it will give you much more - do you see what I mean? So I think it is that sort of point which is So I think it is that sort of point which is being illustrated here. Because the elder gave his children more than he had promised, so you don't fail to keep a promise if you give the person you promised to give something to more than you had actually promised to give them. Supposing you said to someone 'just come outside and I'll give you a bag of sweets', and they come outside and you give them two bags of sweets - well have you told a lie? Because the bag of sweets is contained in the two bags of sweets. Technically you have

perhaps, but not ethically. You haven't given them what you promised, you have given them more than you promised! So in a way you have more than kept your word. So certainly this passage is not to be understood as justifying lies, not even in a good cause. There was no lie spoken by the Buddha, or the father, in that connection.

Dhammarati: This is hair splitting but Sariputra does say, 'even if the elder hadn't given them any cart at all he wouldn't have been lying because he had formed the intention that by tactful means I will cause my children to escape.'

S: Yes, because the escape was the big thing, that is what We really gave them. That was the real gift, which was greater than any cart, so the same principle applies.

Dhammarati: Isn't this a similar line of reasoning that the Catholic Church could use, that the Communist party could use though to justify certain courses of action?

S: then the proof of the pudding would be in the eating. 7Let's have the revolution and then everyone will have enough to eat and drink, no-one will have to work'. Well it hasn't worked out in any communist country yet. They are still having to explain why they are lagging behind the capitalist countries. So the substance of it is that there is no question of untruth involved here. This parable does not condone the telling of a falsehood for the sake of Buddhism, so to speak, or for the sake of helping someone or someone's s spiritual development.

Tejananda: It goes to Ratnaprabha again.

Ratnaprabha: This one is about the everlasting e~stance of phenomena.

S: He really does think them up, doesn't he (laughter)

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Obviously has a lot of spare time these days.

Ratnaprabha: Part of the chapter that we have dealing with includes the following guote. 'All things abide in their fixed order, hence the world abide~ forever. and there is a footnote to the effect that Chih-i says that this means that every phenomenon has an unshakeable and ever- lasting existence. What is the meaning of this?

S: The meaning is that Chinese is not a very philsofphical Thnguage. What does Gladwick say, did anyone look this up, because doesn't he say ..., who translates from the Sanskrit. (K: Kern', Yes Kern. V: This is Soothill's.

S: No, I think it is so approximate and literary, that one can't get the real meaning.

Ratnaprabha: Well there is the actual Sanskrit on page 70 in the footnote, if you'd like to

refer to it.

S: It's 'sdharma-sthitim' - dharma is used here more in the sense of cosmic law, which of course the Dharma in the sense of the Buddha's teaching reflects. The cosmic law is established according to a certain order, it's not random, it's not fortuitous. The cosmic law proceeds in a certain way or in certain ways. For instance the pratitya samutpada and that is unshakeable. This is what the text is getting at. 'Law order or fixed position indicates suchness', it is not that the dharma is fixed in the sense of being unchanging, in the sense of eternalism, but that it's proceeding in a certain way is fixed. This is in a way what you mean by the term law in a more scientific sense. I don't quite get the context here. let's have a look. 'All things abide in their fixed order, the world abides forever.' I suppose that one could say that here the Buddha or whoever it is is speaking, is speaking of seeing the world, seeing existence in terms of Dharma, seeing it in terms of a certain undeviating order. Seeing it especially, perhaps, in terms of the two orders, that is to say the cyclical and the spiral. These are fixed in the sense that if you develop a mental state which pertains to the round you won't experience the fruits of the spiral and vice versa, because there is a fixed order. Do you get the idea? So there is a fixed order in that sense that the passage is speaking.

V: I don't understand that Bhante, what you said There about the round and the spiral.

S: Did anybody understand it? (V's Yes) Well maybe someone wThll explain it so I can check it back.

Kulamitra: Well (laughter), I don't think there is anything to add is there, if you develop a reactive mental state it won't result in a creative mental state. That is in the nature of things. Or even presumably if you have an unskilful state of mind it won't result in a skilful state of mind.

S: In other words the relationship between the two is fixed, That particular order. That reactive leads to reactive and the spiral leads to spiral is fixed, you can rely upon it. JuSt as you can rely on the law of gravitation, that if you jump into the air that you will come down, that the law of Gravitation

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won't be suddenly suspended and you go floating up into the air - it is a fixed law, a determinate law, the law that endures. In other words it is a sort of affirmation of

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Buddhism's faith in the Dharma is, for want of a better term, cosmic law. One can think of it in terms of the five Niyamas they too can be depended on not to vary, not to change. And of course especially if one takes the example of the pratitya-samutpada, they represent a sort of middle way between existence and non-existence, in dependence upon A B arises.

What was the comment by the Chinese master? 'According to Chih-i dharma-niyamata, law-order or fixed position indicates suchness.' Because that's the way things are. 'That is, every law (or being) abides in suchness or reality.' Though of course one mustn't think of the

thing as separate from the reality or suchness in which it is said to abide. You mustn't sort of abstract it, abstract the concept of suchness and reify it in that sort of way. 'Because of standing on reality, all laws (or beings) abide forever, and therefore every phenomenon also has an unshakable and everlasting existence.' Not that it is something unchanging, that I think is the confusion, it is fixed in that the type of process which it represents can be relied upon to go on in that particular way.

Cittapala: Bhante, in connection with that would the Hinayana idea of the Arahant be positing some way in which you could not engage in either of those. That you cease to engage in the unskillful but that you haven't, as it were, engaged in the skillful and therefore you are suspended in this sort of no-man's land in between?

S: You could look at it like that, but then all the Hinayana texts, Theravada texts quite clearly speak of the Arahant as having cultivated skillful mental states. There are.., I mentioned yesterday that passage where Sariputra defines Nirvana, or Nibbana as the cessation of greed hatred and delusion and leaves it at that, but despite that I think it would be accepted by all followers of the Theravada that the Arahant, in order to become an Arahant has to practice all sorts of skillful mental states, cultivate all sorts of skillful mental states. So one couldn't really speak of him as simply abstaining from unskillful mental states. That would be a bit artificial.

Cittapala: But nevertheless it does seem in this sutra there is that imputation almost quite explicitly that that is exactly what the Hinayana Nirvana is. That it is just a destruction of the passions and therefore perhaps a ceasing of birth and death but it is not complete extinction in the Mahayana sense.

S: There may have been people, possibly the Sautrantikas. For instance, who did think, perhaps, in that sort of way. But if one refers to the Pali text, takes them as representative of at least one type of Hinayana, they certainly give some emphasis at least to the positive and skillful aspect of the spiritual life and of Nirvana itself. Not always and not in all passages. So the Hinayana of this particular Mahayana sutra and perhaps of others is perhaps to be regarded as

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representing a particular attitude in an extreme form rather than as coinciding with the teachings of any particular school. Do you see what I mean?

Cittapala: Well I sort of do, yes, but what worries me is that this White Lotus Sutra, or the compiler of the White Lotus Sutra is calling these people Arahants when it seems that in actual fact they couldn't possibly...

S: It just simply means that in the course of centuries the term has been debased. Like the term bhikkhu, in the Pali, the Dhammapada, bhikkhu and Brahmana is tantamount to Arahant, but very few bhikkhus are Arahants nowadays. The word Arya was debased. Perhaps one has to get used to the fact that the Mahayana sutras use many of the terms that we find, say, in the Pali Canon in a quite different sense. As I said, as representing, perhaps,

a certain type of attitude rather than a particular school or schools. Perhaps it is unfortunate and tending to lead to confusion the fact that the word Arahant has been used in that way. Because it has quite a different kind of connotation, say, in the Pali scriptures. Though even in the Pali scriptures you can see how, or at least certain parts of the Pali scriptures you can see how that sort of development could have taken place. ( ? ) that quite negative sort of version of the Arahant ideal which you do get presented in the Mahayana sutras, the beginnings are to be seen in some parts of the Pali Canon. The beginnings of that process which led to that extreme development, even though it may not have been represented literally by actual schools. Perhaps certain individuals did embody it.

Tejananda: Now a question from myself on sectarianism. In the lecture, towards the end, you asked the question is sectarianism a necessary stage and you go on to say that formerly it might have been, paraphrasing it, in so far as different sects could lack knowledge of one another and so it was possible to fo~one'ssectandinore all the others.

S: Yes, in a way you weren't consciously and deliberately sectarian as it were. Your particular sect was the only one you were acquainted with so, so far as you were concerned it wasn't a sect, it was Buddhism or Christianity or whatever.

Tejananda: That more or less covers what I was going to say, because, what you say after that suggests that you see sectarianism principally as an attitude of wilful adherence to a part when the whole is quite clearly in view.(i.e. taking the branch for the tree). If this is the case, the earlier stage would seem not to be sectarianism, as such, but merely the existence of different sects, religions, etc.. which were ignorant of one another. Could you comment on that?

S: I wonder whether any religion or sect was always literally completely ignorant of the others. Perhaps uneducated people in the middle ages living in villages weren't always aware that there were other forms of religion, or other forms later on of Christianity. But the scholars, the clerics, they must have been aware. All down through the middle ages, especially

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the later middle ages perhaps Christian theologians were very well aware of the Islamic thinkers and of Islam as a danger if only for political reasons. During the middle ages Averroes was really a name to frighten the theological ( ? ) with. He was much refuted by Thomas Aquinas and other theologians. You even find him represented in medieval art, he is usually a Turkish looking, turbaned figure being trampled upon by St. Thomas Aquinas or some other Dominican Saint or theologian. Or hurled down into hell in last judgement scenes; have you ever seen this figure? I saw him several times in Italy, and it was Averroes. The Christian theologians, especially the dominicans had it in for him particularly because he denied that each individual human being had, I am paraphrasing here, an intellect of his own - intellect in a quite technical sense. He believed that there was one Intellect, with a capital 'I' for the whole of humanity. So he didn't believe that each individual had, as it were, a separate immortal soul and therefore he didn't believe in personal immortality. So this was quite unacceptable to the Christian church. I mention this just to show that even during the middle ages the well informed were quite well aware of the existence of other religions. And during the reformation period, yes, the Protestants were well aware of the Catholics and the

Catholics of the Protestants. And one Protestant sect was aware of the others. But there was usually a persistence in one's own point of view and a complete lack of willingness even to try to understand the point of view of the other person. As in Northern Ireland today, as between Catholics and Protestants there. Do you see what I mean? But if for instance there was a quite ordinary peasant living in some remote village and who just went along to his own local church or temple or priest or guru or whatever, he just doesn't know anything else, he is not being consciously and deliberately sectarian in following just his particular path or following just what he is familiar with or just what he is acquainted with.

V: Avarroes was a Christian theologian?

S: No, he was a Muslim.

V: He was a Muslim, was he a Moor. Was he in Spain, a Moor?

S: I don't remember where he came from. He might have been, I rather doubt it actually. I think more likely he was from the middle East. You can look him up in the Encyclopaedia Britannica or Hastings' Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.

Tejananda: Now Dharmadhara on the FWBO and non-sectarianism.

Dharmadhara: In the lecture you said that the FWBO is Buddhist but non-sectarian. How can we present ourselves as non-sectarian without appearing to be sectarian in refusing to compromise in various situations?

S: I think it can only be through being quite patient and explaining to people what our attitude is. If their own attitude is such that they aren't really willing to listen in a real sense, there is very little we can do, unfortunately. Because if you are surrounded by sects, even if you yourself are not a sect, you look like a sect. It is similar with the caste system in India, you may not believe in caste nor wish

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to observe it but if you are surrounded by caste your particular group looks like a caste. Do you see what I mean? That is rather unfortunate. In this country some people may think, there is Theravada, then there is Zen, then there is Tibetan Buddhism and then there is the FWBO. But it isn't really like that, as though we are a quite separate approach as Zen is separate from Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism is separate from the Theravada. As though we exclude all of them in the same way that they exclude one another, we don't. Perhaps we have to make that more clear. I am sure there are ways in which we can do this. I think we do do it, because sometimes in our newsletter we feature or we refer to say a Chan master or to Milarepa or to Buddhagosa; it is quite clear that we have a broad range of reference in this respect, our sympathies are quite broad. I think the danger then is that people see you as superficially eclectic.

Saddhaloka: Aren't we actually, in a sense, quite definitely sectarian in that we do have our own way of doing things and my experience has actually been that, talking to groups of

people who have been trying to say 'but isn't it all one?' and having to say no, there are differences, we are different. We have our own way of things. It is almost as if in being quite definitely ourselves, in a way we are being sectarian.

S: Hmm. But then what are we 'sectarian' (single inverted commas) about? You might say we are sectarian about the centrality of Going for Refuge. Well if we emphasise that that isn't really cutting us off from other forms of Buddhism or making us sectarian because that Going for Refuge is there in all other forms of Buddhism but rather deeply buried and not emphasised in the way that we emphasise it. So the fact that we emphasise it doesn't mean that we are really being sectarian, because we are drawing attention to something that we have in common with all other Buddhists and that they should have in common with one another and with us, but which they don't realise they have in common and should have in common. Do you see what I mean? It's like ( ) you are preaching universal brotherhood and not being nationalistic, everybody else believes in nationalism, they don't believe in brotherhood. So you are preaching something different, you are preaching universal brotherhood, so are you being narrow in the same way that they are being narrow? (V's No) Do you see what I mean? So can you be accused of being sectarian because you preach, say, universal brotherhood and they don't preach it. So you are preaching something different, something of your own, but are you guilty of sectarianism? I think we are sectarian only in the sense that we are universal and others aren't; or at least we are more universal. Universal in the sense that we recognise the whole Buddhist tradition and try to do justice to it and derive benefit from it.

Cittapala: Isn't part of the way that one distinguishes sectarianism associated with the cultural form through which one gives expression to the inner content? And to that extent doesn't the FWBO espouse a very particular form which would in a sense back up what Saddhaloka was indicating, that we have a sectarianism about us?

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S: I think the same applies to that as I have said already. Because whence do we derive our form? We have, as it were, built it up, from elements in different Buddhist traditions. Our form tries to embody in a way, what is common and fundamental in all forms of Buddhism. So as long as you get those other, let us say genuinely sectarian forms of Buddhism, a movement which tries to be non-sectarian will have the appearance of a sectarian movement. That applies to our form because if you have a movement it must have a form and the form is specific. But that specificity doesn't necessarily imply sectarianism.

Kulamitra: What about our reliance on you as our teacher. Because we don't encourage Mitras or members of the Order to take teachings from other Buddhist teachers and we have all gone for refuge to you. Does that not have an effect in this area?

S: Then one might ask why does not one listen to other Buddhist teachers? In a sense one does, because one reads books at least. One might say in principle one has no objection to listening to all sorts of teachers, the point is, what have they to teach, are they really able to help? Do they give a right emphasis or not? If you are very well established in the FWBO and really have gone for refuge and understand what you are doing there is no reason why

you shouldn't go and study something with someone who has very definite limitations but happens to know, or be acquainted with some aspect of Buddhist teaching that you want to become acquainted with. But I think there are dangers in that because we have lost people in the past, like that. They don't come back to us, they lapse into that particular limited form of Buddhism, sometimes. But just as people have gone outside the Movement and learnt Yoga, gone outside the Movement and learnt karate and then come back with it, into the Movement, with what they have learnt and integrated it into our overall approach; people could go outside, they could go even to the East and study with specialists in this or that particular form of Buddhism and then come back and make whatever they have learnt part of our own overall traditional practice and so on. But they would need to be quite strong to do that and quite clear what they were doing. It has happened already, or started happening. Karmalasila went on a Vipassana course, he discussed this with me thoroughly and in fact I originally suggested he might do this. Because he wanted to explore different approaches to the development of insight, and he found that particular retreat or course which he took quite useful. But he also saw more clearly the limitations of that particular approach. But he got a few hints that he was able to bring back with him to Vajraloka. But I am still quite concerned about people's tendency, perhaps not now, to - what do we call it - 'shop around', or to do quite a bit of window shopping, to such an extent that they don't get on with the real job. It is just another distraction.

Dhammarati: In the lecture, Bhante, pertaining to this point you talk about different religious traditions merging, you are saying this is to do with the higher evolution, and you say something to the effect that even ( ) understood this point. I am a Buddhist and accept that, ?

but recently I have been reading Kipling's book A sea of

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Faith and he talks about some of the valuable insights of Buddhism, some of the valuable insights of some humanist traditions and how Christianity is the only tradition broad enough to synthesise these various points of view. If you take those two points of view do you have in effect a sectarianism, and is our argument different in kind from ( ) argument?

S: It isn't formally different, but it is rather interesting That ( ) is a sort of non-theistic Christian and I wonder whether a theistic Christian, who is after all the traditional type of Christian, would be able to make that kind of statement. I know the Catholic Church is trying to do it in a way, its trying for instance to incorporate Zen into Catholic spiritual life; with what success remains to be seen. But I have I must say greater faith in the universality of Buddhism than in the universality of Christianity. And I think if any of the world religions is able in principle to, so to speak, ( ) up all the others, preserving what is good in them, I think it is only Buddhism. Especially say the Mahayana, because it actually throughout its history really shows that. Its willingness to incorporate, its willingness to adapt, its willingness even to change. Christianity historically hasn't shown that sort of willingness at all, it has been a fight among rival churches and rival sects the whole time. It's only very very recently they have started talking in those sort of ecumenical terms, possibly under the influence of Eastern religions. Its so recent this sort of talk it is post war. I can remember



quite easily the days when they didn't talk like that and I'm not a century old yet.

Dhammarati: If arguments were formulated would those be the criteria that you would justify Buddhism's claim to universality, - would you argue it on historical grounds?

S: I would point to history as providing evidence that Buddhism was genuinely universal in its approach, because it has demonstrated that, especially in the case of the Mahayana, throughout the course of its whole history. Whereas Christianity had hardly ever demonstrated that.

V: I was thinking of the Buddhist groups in this country, the Zen or Tibetan, people who choose to follow Buddhism in a particular tradition. Are they necessarily going to be sectarian by virtue of the fact that they have actually chosen to practice within that particular tradition rather than like we do, drawing from all different traditions? Do you foresee the possibility that Buddhists in this country following Zen or Tibetan, or whatever would actually

S: I do see that happening but I think it is partly because, as I touched on this the other day, that people want something quite definite. Sometimes they are in search of security and some of these schools and sects have a very simple straightforward teaching which is easy to grasp and identify with. I think the approach of the FWBO requires a certain amount of almost intellectual capacity and suggests a person who is not in a great hurry to seize hold of something that he can think of as the truth and the approach. Do you see what I mean? I think what I have called sectarianism is quite closely connected with what I have called fundamentalism. And I think

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you are going to get a lot of people attracted to different forms of sectarianism and fundamentalism. This has been one of the post war surprises, the growth of some of the fundamentalist churches, I mean they are the churches that are growing. Not the more traditional, relatively tolerant and broad minded churches like the church of England, they are in a state of stagnation, virtually. But some of these very new, very aggressive, as we would say very sectarian Christian Churches are the ones that are growing very rapidly. And some forms of Hinduism, some forms of Buddhism even which are of that type grow much more rapidly, it seems, than we are growing, because that is what people want, or what a lot of people want. But it isn't necessarily particularly Buddhist or even perhaps particularly Christian. I think it isn't easy to understand the FWBO point of view, I remember in the early days of the FWBO even Order Members had quite a lot of difficulty understanding certain points. You need a certain amount of sophistication, I mean intellectual sophistication. I remember the great difficulty that Order Members had for years understanding the difference between membership in the Order and membership of an FWBO; they got it mixed up in a frightful sort of way for years together, despite all my explanations. There are one or two who still haven't sorted it out, they've just given it up as a bad job (laughter) they don't think about it any more. But to go back to this question of

sectarianism. I think we have to be quite careful not to give to other Buddhist groups the impression of being sectarian because we have a separate organisational structure and a definite point of view of our own. We are really trying to bring out, as it were, from Buddhist tradition what is of fundamental importance and therefore what is common to all forms of Buddhism. Things like the going for refuge, some of these things have been neglected by some forms of Buddhism in the past. So we don't become sectarian, in the true sense of the term because we draw particular attention to these more common, more universal, more central features of Buddhism.

Suvajra: In light of what you said earlier about not giving that impression to other Buddhist groups, do you not think that our name, that we attach to the form of our Buddhism, i.e. Western Buddhism is actually a hindrance in that area? Does it actually give the impression of a sect that is a Western form of Buddhism.

S: I think this would apply to any name that you had. I have been wondering nonetheless whether we shouldn't change that name because we have spread to the East and are probably going to spread to the North and the South. But that maybe we can think about a little later on. But yes, the fact that you have a name, like the fact that you have a form, does differentiate you, but you cannot but be differentiated if you exist in this world. It's a question of spirit and attitude, the spirit and attitude in forming the form and communicating yourself through the form. There is also the question of collaboration. Sometimes people are talking about the collaboration between different groups. What they usually mean is some sort of organisation not to say political tie up. I think in this connection what one has to try to get across to people is that collaboration can only spring out of personal contact and understanding. There is then no question of you collaborating with them as an organisation when personally and individually they want to keep you at an arms length, which often seems to be the case. One particular Order Member I know recently tried to

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discuss in a very pleasant and positive way, tried to discuss a particular question which a member of another Buddhist group and he simply refused to discuss the matter. Also another thing we have to be careful of is we don't allow ourselves to be accused of non-co-operation when what the other party of group wants is co-operation on their terms. I think this is very often the case. They don't always realize that they are doing this because they take it that their terms are terms which obviously everybody must accept, every Buddhist must accept. They are so unaware that they don't always realize what they are doing, they don't realize always that they are expecting you to co-operate on their terms, not on terms which are common to you both.

V: Can you give an example?

S: An example which turned up some years ago. For instance suppose a Zen group says it

would be a good idea if we co-operated and meditated together. Well they take it for granted that you are going to sit facing the wall, do you see what I mean? And if you are not ready to face the wall because that is not your custom, well they just don't want to co-operate with you or meditate with you. They don't even think that if you agreed, that yes it would be a good thing to meditate together you should then discuss how should we do this, do this in some way that is acceptable to both of us. They assume that of course you will sit and face the wall because that is the way to meditate, and if you don't know that then you don't know anything.

V: Could I just mention a positive example of co-operation is going on at the moment in Angulimala~ the prison visitors association, which does seem to be very much on equal terms, there are bhikkhus and so on joining in our seven fold puja and it does actually feel very good to be co-operating on a specific ...

S: But again, what is the moral of that, how did that start? What made that possible.

V: Having a specific project.

S: No, that all came later, it was nothing to do with that.

V: Was it contact first of all?

S: Yes, it was Khemadhammo coming and seeing me. The only Chithurst bhikkhu who ever did. He wanted to talk about some personal matter, he felt he couldn't discuss it with any of the bhikkhus, so he came to talk with me about it and in that we got to know each other and he then came from time to time. And then he talked with me about setting up Angulimala, asked if we would be ready to co-operate and because I had got to know him and had some trust in him, even though not seeing completely eye to eye with him, I said yes we can certainly give our co-operation. And that is how it has happened. That is what I meant by saying there is no question of organi~ational co-operation keeping you at an arms length personally. HP didn't do that, first came the personal contact and a certain measure of mutual confidence and then came the co~nner~tinn in that particular venture which he wanted to Set up. And since we weren't able to do that by ourselves, we were too busy with various things, I was quite happy that he was doing it and that he wanted us to join in, so this is what

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is going on. So he did make that personal approach and we responded accordingly, that's why it is working. But he is the only one who has ever done that.

Cittapala: Do you think that as a movement, as an Order I suppose, we go out enough towards other Buddhists of other groups, to initiate that kind of personal contact so that possibly it might develop into something more?

S: I think at present we are not in a position to do that, because we haven't got enough people to do all the things that need to be done within our own movement. But in the future it may not be impossible. We are trying to make some approach to other groups through our Aid for India activities and our slide shows and so on. I suggested to Padmasuri that she took

her 'show', for want of a better word, around to other Buddhist groups. Not only because it would be good for them to know what was going on but as a means of making contact with them.

Tejananda: Now a question from Ratnaguna on the section in the talk called 'The situation today'.

Ratnaguna: At the end of today's lecture you talk about a new age coming about with one recognised goal and one way of the higher evolution of man (I've paraphrased that) What did you have in mind, I didn't quite understand that, didn't quite see whether you meant the

S: I think I had in mind a new society on a quite extensive scale, quite grand scale. I think that is what I was doing, but I was at pains to point out that it wouldn't just come about automatically, because I used that word 'new age' and therefore I wanted guard against misunderstanding. But this is an option that is before humanity, if it is sensible enough. Whether it will is quite another matter.

Ratnaguna: I suppose to me it didn't go along with what you said in another seminar about a pluralistic society.

S: No, that's a purely verbal contradiction in a way. A plural society is a society. In order to have a plural society there have got to be certain basic issues that you agree upon.

Ratnaguna: You seem to be saying in that seminar that a pluralistic society would be; Buddhists would be able to practice Buddhism, Muslims would be able to practice ...

S: Yes, but you could only have Muslims practicing Islam in the same society that Buddhists were practicing Buddhism if they agreed on certain fundamentals. Otherwise they couldn't even live together in the same society. And those things on which they agreed, or upon which it was possible for them to agree would be much more akin to the principles of Buddhism than to the principles of Islam. (Laughter) Don't forget a Muslim regards it as highly undesirable, to say the least, to live in a society which is not governed by Muslims. They have got a special term for that. It is considered shameful for a Muslim to have to live under a non-Muslim government. A pluralistic society really means a democratic society, which really means a Buddhist society. Do you see what I mean?

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Ratnaguna: Or those other, say, religious groups, becoming more Buddhistic. (S: Yes) I mean (the goals of Buddhism ... ?

S: I have gone into this a bit in India, in lectures. I've discussed the question of what one means by secular state, India is supposed to be a secular state, and there are people following different religions. But if people following different religions agree to live in harmony together within a secular state they have already modified their religious position, in a

particular way. Assuming they are not merely tolerating the situation and waiting for the time when they can conquer and convert all the others. Because if you agree positively and happily to live side by side with other people following apparently a different spiritual path it means that you don't regard them as being totally wrong, you don't regard them as being on a path to perdition or as going against the will of God. You must accept, you must believe that there is some good in what they are doing, at least. And therefore will be content to, well not exactly to leave them to it but not to do anything more than just discuss and try to explain your point of view. You will feel no urge whatever to convert them forcibly to your point of view. So be able to live within or as a pluralistic society within a secular state in that sort of way suggests a certain basic spiritual philosophy which is more akin to the philosophy of Buddhism than it is akin to the philosophy of Hinduism or Islam or Christianity, or Ju~daism.

Cittapala: Is your impression then of our current society in Britain which some commentators have called a pluralistic society is that it is more based along the lines of tolerance waiting for the opportunity to convert the other religions rather than a general ...?

S: No, I think there are some small groups that are waiting but I think on the whole, most people following or not following, most churches or schools or whatever, are not waiting for that sort of opportunity. I think they are genuinely happy, perhaps even in the negative sort of way of not minding, with a pluralistic society. I think this is one of the great advantages of Britain. I think there are certainly groups existing in Britain which tolerate the pluralistic society, take advantage of it but don't really agree with it in principle; especially the Muslims. And I think it is quite dangerous to have too many of such people in a pluralistic society and not do anything about it.

Kulamitra: Bhante, do you think there is any chance at all that outside Islamic states, in other words in cases like Britain, Muslims will begin to moderate their attitude in the same way that Christians themselves have over the centuries?

S: I think that is a possibility. I think therefore it is quite unfortunate if you encourage ethnic minorities to stay within particular ethnic gettos, and encourage their 'culture' (single inverted commas). I think this is an absolute mistake from the point of view of the pluralistic society. That you allow Muslims to have Muslim schools and Jews to have Jewish schools and Hindus to have Hindu schools. That is why I am not happy about even Buddhist schools in that sort of way. Not that sort of way. I am not happy about a sectarian type Buddhist school. So I think one shouldn't encourage the development within

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the plural society of little enclaves the spirit of which is foreign to that of the pluralistic society. I think this is what we are doing under the influence of mistaken educational theory.

(end of tape 5)

You can even read articles written by educationalists who say that if the child goes to school and is speaking caribbean type English then he should be encouraged to speak caribbean type English and not standard English because that is his culture. And that he should have

textbooks in Caribbean English and so on and so forth. This seems to me absolute madness, it is asking for trouble. You will develop in the end a sort of caste system like they have got in India. I am quite against all that. Of course I am against it in theory but I don't take any stand politically but I am sometimes tempted to because I think it is quite disastrous for this country to develop, to allow these separate enclaves. But the younger people, they want to get out of the ghetto, out of the enclave. It is the older people who want to stay in and these misguided educationalists try to push back the young people into their ethnic ghettos rather than encouraging them to come out and be part of the broader society and mix in that, intermarry with that. So that there is just one society instead of being split up into all sorts of little exclusive groups.

V: What do you mean you'd be tempted to act politically?

b~t S: Aha - well give speeches~~newspaper, stand for parliament, laughter) - I am too old for that. But I did hear today on the Radio that poor old Manny Shinwell died at 101, he had a good innings. So with luck I've still forty one years left. laughter)

V: Sixty is young for a prime minister.

S: Yes, but it takes time to get there! You have got to have an insatiable ambition. Anyway let's move on.

Tejananda: Still in the general topic a question from Dhammarati on 'The new age'.

Dhammarati: At the end of the lecture you paint a picture of what is possible: that we could enter a new age, when all religions would see that they were all tendencies in the one stream of the Higher Evolution, when we would have one culture to which all cultures gave of their best, At a time when religious fundamentalism seems stronger than it has in fifteen years and when rampant nationalism is provoking international violence, does this still seem a realistic possibility to you?

S: Yes, definitely. But it can be achieved only by human beings and that is why I feel a bit sad when even within the Movement, even within the Order, not very many people seem very, very inspired by that sort of vision which could be carried out within our own immediate environment, to some extent, within a comparatively short time.

Dhammarati: Can I ask what you see as necessary first to move us towards this, practically speaking?

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S: I think I shall dodge this one and say that that is again something you have to trash out in your Chapter meetings. (laughter)

Dhammarati: You wouldn't like to give us an agenda for discussion would you?

S: Perhaps I'll dodge again, perhaps that is something that has to be thrashed out in the

chapter meetings. Maybe people shouldn't even look to me too much. I have said so much, I have given so many lectures, I have written so many thousands of words, there is so much on tape I think I can almost pack up and go back to the Himalayas (laughter), p~ovi4ed I ca~ get a visa, find a comfortable cave. But the blueprint is there, it is up to people to carry it out. I must admit I am feeling a little bit disappointed lately when I see quite a lot of sloth and torpor around in the Movement, even within the Order, but again this is something that needs to be thrashed out in the chapters.

Dhammarati: Could I ask you at least to comment on that. Why you think there has been a shift away from people being excited by the idea of a new society?

S: Well in theory everybody is involved with it but I think sometimes they can lose sight of the overall picture and the general vision because they are bogged down in the details. To cite the classic example, you have just got your nose bent down over the bag of beans that you are packing and don't see much more than that. You just see your little corner of the Movement, your particular job. Perhaps you don't even see far beyond your own centre. That's why it is very good having the FWBO day celebrations and the Order day celebrations, they give people a broader perspective. And National Order weekends do. I was quite glad today to receive from West London an actual programme in advance, I thought that a great improvement. So clearly someone is giving thought to it all and organising it properly.

Tejananda: Now a question from Prakasha about the new society outside the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order.

Prakasha: In the lecture Evolution~and Extinction five ages, the fourth age being the Axial age going up to the present period and the fifth age being the New age. Do you still have this view point and what are the criteria that make up the new age, and what is the difference between the new a e and the new societ ?

S: They are basically the same, the new age is that age in The world's history when the new society comes into being and overspreads the whole earth, one might say. The new society, I defined it in or described it in my Brighton lecture on other occasions. In a broad way there are all sorts of bodies and agencies and individuals who are working towards something of this sort. I think our own particular blueprint is probably clearer than most, at least in general outline, broad principles. Some people are working on certain aspects in a very detailed way to a far greater extent than we are doing or are able to do at present, and it is not a bad thing to be in contact with

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their work and at least know what they are doing. Say people working in the field of ecology and so on, or small industries, that sort of thing.

Prakasha: The lecture seems to suggest something in particular about the twentieth century, say, mass communication or

S: Well again it provides an opportunity. Whether the media will enable us to communicate

better than before or not, that remains to be seen. I mean, we have got all sorts of things, there is not just the telephone and the telegraph and the radio and the television. There is now the word processor, the computer - all these things. You can phone through a book to Hong Kong for instance. I don't know the details, ask any of the lads in the Order Office, you just pick up the phone and do something and it prints it at the other end - over the phone! This is amazing when you think of it, it is really quite magical, quite miraculous.

Prakasha: Could you isolate any particular factor in the twentieth century that say makes it any different from any other century in terms of it being conducive to the new society?

S: I think there is nothing that is conducive, or more conducive, it is simply that there are more opportunities and facilities if we only had the will to use them. You sometimes hear people saying, 'such and such a thing can be done if there is the political will', it is really a matter of that kind of thing, a sort of political will, an ideal or idealised political will. I mean, certain things are possible, we have got the equipment, got the means; do we have the will? It is the same question that we started off with, do we have the motivation?

Dhammarati: Can I just take up one specific point in that Bhante. My own experience in speaking to, for instance, evangelical Christians in the street - I was speaking to someone from the Moonies the other day - they seem to have a set of beliefs which are absolutely closed. That any objection that you care to make can be dismissed on the grounds of their basic assumptions. Given that you have for instance fundamentalist religions so influential now for instance in American society, do you feel that people like that are actually open to discussion, are open to modification ...?

S: I think they're not, and there are a lot of them around, That is quite a terrifying thought. But why have they become like that? I think fundamentalism, or reversion or regression ? ) is quite a feature of the last couple of decades. You see them coming all over the place, and I think there is a definite reason for this. I have come to the conclusion that it constitutes a definite pattern and I think what has happened, broadly, and one saw this especially in the case of Iran, that the rate of industrial and technological change was too great and people backed off from it. In the case of Britain we haven't had this, except on a very, very tiny scale, why? - because Britain was the first industrial nation and the process of industrialisation was spread over at least a century, of not a century and a half. So we had industrialisation bit by bit, so even though there were great dislocations in our social and cultural life as a result of that process it didn't provoke that kind of, what shall I

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say, fundamentalist backlash which you experienced in so many other countries. Where the authorities, the government have forced certain people to undergo that same process of transformation, that same process of industrialisation in the course of a generation. People just haven't been able to stand it and they have reacted, they have gone back to the old and the familiar and they have been very open to the appeal of fundamentalist leaders of various kinds. So you have had it in Iran, you have had it in India to some extent, you are having it now in America, you are having it in many parts of the world.



Dhammarati: And if we are intending to bring about some dissemination of the principles that we are working from, if we are working in a culture that has very entrenched and very influential groups like that, how is that process achieved? How is that dialogue going to proceed?

S: I think it is going to be very difficult to enter into a dialogue with fundamentalists. I think probably fundamentalism will begin to fade away when the pressures and the tensions are reduced. You have seen a change, some change, already in Iran. You have seen it in China, there perhaps it was a bit different but in certain respects Chairman Mao tried to force the pace and there was reaction, but that was a rather different kind of reaction because he tried to force the pace in a rather different kind of way. Also you had it in Cambodia, they tried to do the work of a couple of centuries in a couple of years, by force, but it hasn't worked. Again, this is a somewhat different sort of situation, but there is the same lack of success when you try to do too much too quickly.

Cittapala: Do you think there is anything which one could identify in the archetypes of the collective unconscious which might account for that kind of backlash?

S: I think it is a natural thing, that if people try to hurry you too much that you dig your heels in and you even retreat. You go back to predispositions where you feel more safe, more secure, more comfortable. Just as individuals in situations of stress tend to revert to infantile attitudes, so even societies, even nations, under conditions of great stress as occur when overrapid industrialisation is pushed through, they retreat into their national childhood. They retreat into older, simpler attitudes and then they are very susceptible to the appeals of the fundamentalist preachers. They retreat into childlike certainties.

Kulamitra: If you have identified this basic pattern it seems to suggest that we need to take advantage of what opportunities arise. For instance your own return to this country seems to have coincided with a sort of expansive psychological attitude (S: That's true) in this country, which you were able to take advantage of. Presumably in America at some future date there will be a reaction the other way during which maybe we will be able to have a bigger ...

S: Yes, I think we actually do have to ..., Subhuti feels strongly that now is our time to get into Spain, because Spain has entered the common market, there is an expansive feeling, they like English people, they welcome English people at least at present. It's not difficult to live there and they've just recently introduced, or a few years ago

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they introduced, after Franco's time a freedom of religion act so there is no difficulty whatever about our operating there quite legally and in a recognised way. It's simpler and more straightforward than it is in Britain. And there are only a few very small Buddhist groups. So we ought really to be taking advantage of that opportunity. So yes, I think you are quite

right, we just have to survey the scene and take advantage of shifts and changes in public attitudes or shifts and changes in the attitude of certain sections of the public. Yes, it is quite interesting that Sona wrote to me for instance that after the assassination of the Swedish prime minister they got quite a few more people going along to their classes. Because people started thinking a bit seriously, they were roused a bit out of their apathy. It wasn't dramatic, wasn't a question of hundreds of new people but certainly a marked difference due apparently to that particular happening. I also got a poster from Glasgow which said words to this effect, 'Are you unemployed? Why waste your time? Come and learn to meditate.' I thought that was good, trying to get into that area, to those sort of people.

Kulamitra: I think one of the things I was trying to suggest is that if you are not established enough you are not in a position to take advantage of those situations. (S: Yes, right) You need to have some establishment to quickly expand from, don't you.

S: Yes, that's true. That you can quickly deploy to meet that particular need.

Kulamitra: ( ? ) taking more a long term view, not that only within the first five years can you prove whether you can succeed somewhere or not. I was thinking of ...

S: Well I think we have shown in Britain that we can succeed and establish ourselves, given a chance, under not very - I won't say favourable circumstances, but - not very encouraging circumstances. A lot of apathy and indifference there, but none the less we have succeeded in establishing something which is now quite solidly based and which is definitely going to survive. But I think we will probably..., we will go on growing very slowly and steadily but I think we will expand dramatically only when we see and are able to identify certain waves of interest in the larger public, or in a Section of the larger public, and move in to take advantage of it. Because if it is a very large wave it may overtake us and we may not have to do very much. But that is possibly unlikely, perhaps we should keep our eyes open for shifts and changes in public attitudes. Shifts and changes of which perhaps we can take skilful advantage. For instance, yes, the public attitude towards meditation. We have been able to attract quite a lot of people thorough meditation, because meditation is popular. Our vegetarian restaurants, a million people in Britain are ve~arians, so yes. It wouldn't have been very helpful perhaps fifty years ago to open a Buddhist vegetarian restaurant, I mean, who would you have got along, just a few very sort of cranky people. but now can you have quite ordinary people coming along and wanting vegetarian food, and perhaps in some cases being interested that the vegetarian restaurant is run by Buddhists and is part of their right livelihood scheme. Which

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is again part of their practice of th~~r religion. So we can take advantage of the public swing in favour of vegetarianism or take advantage of the public swing in favour of say yoga or karate or whatever.

Virananda: Do you believe that the change to a new society will come about through public

activity, the impetus will come from the root upwards so to speak, from the large majority of people and filter through to the ...

S: Yes, I think so far as the majority of people are concerned it will come about through them coming into contact with some body or some group, some organisation, some movement. But of course behind that body or group or movement will have to be individuals who know what they are doing. That is why we don't simply as Order Members just live at home, say, with a wife and kids and just talk about Buddhism over the garden fence to Mr. Blogs next door when he has a bit of a break from mowing his lawn. We establish centres, public centres and try to attract people to them. We could function in that other way but I think it would be a much much longer process unless we have a definite charisma, which a few people have got, but not many. But through a centre even people without charisma can do quite a lot and attract a lot of people.

Tejananda: Prakasha had another question on the new society.

Prakasha: To what extent can one use the term new society as we use it to those outside the FWBO and those outside Buddhism?

S: Well we only speak as ourselves and the nucleus of a new society. I think we can say that there are other nuclei, perhaps rather more one sided than we are in some cases but I think there are other nuclei and even then perhaps one day they will all join up. It is very difficult to say. I don't think we are entirely alone though I think our particular synthesis of nuclear elements is probably richer than most because we include work, the arts, meditation, spiritual life in general. Do you see what I mean? Whereas some of these, what I have called the nuclei of the new society will be dealing with just one particular aspect. Some may be into meditation, some may be into the arts and some may be into ecology, some may be into small is beautiful. But we have brought all these nuclear elements together, at least in principle, at least to some extent.

Tejananda: Now Susiddhi has a question on Krsna and Dionysus.

Susiddhi: Firstly, would you like to comment on the obvious similarity between Krsna and the gopi and Dionysus and bacchae?

S: I wouldn't say there was any resemblance at all (laughter) it's entirely superficial. Well there is one man and a whole lot of crazy women, I very nearly said one sensual man and a lot of crazy women but that's not really quite accurate. Dionysus has been identified with Krsna, I believe the (bactrian?) Greeks the Krsna whom they encountered in India with their own Dionysus. I think the feeling of the two is quite, quite different. Dionysus is a mad sort of figure, he comes from India incidentally, is represented as coming from

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India. And he is surrounded by these demented and potentially very destructive and murderous women. Euripides in his ( ? ) paints a really pathological sort of picture, all these women are potentially and in some cases actual murderers. But Krsna and the gopis

is quite different, is very beautiful, is very serene and harmonious. You get this figure of the young cowherd in the forest and all these beautiful young women leaving their homes at night and dancing around him very harmoniously and pleasantly in a circle. There is no violence there is no disturbance, there is nothing pathological, it is all rather beautiful and pleasing. Do you see what I mean? So yes, very formally there is a resemblance, there is one man who is the leader and a host of women surrounding him but the feeling and the general impression and the overall atmosphere, I would say, is very, very different.

Susiddhi: I think I would be right in saying that the bacchae didn't get nasty until they were interfered with from the outside. I always took it to be a parallel, that your energies, its when you block them and try to interfere with them.

S: Well that is a modern and as it were psychological interpretation. But one could say that can you imagine those gopis behaving like that, I personally can't. Supposing someone did come and break up their dance I would imagine that the gopis would just laugh and just dance around the, or something like that, not want to tear them to pieces. (laughter)

V: Isn't there more of a connection between Orpheus and Krsna?

S: He was murdered by women though (V: That's true) They cut his head off and flung it into the river. I must say I get a totally different impression. I feel as though the symbolism of Krsna and the gopis is on a different level, more archetypal. if you like a more spiritual level. Whereas the symbolism of Dionysus and the M~enads is much closer to ordinary human psychology. So the pattern may in a way be similar but I think the content of the pattern is rather different. You could say that is a personal impression, one can read these myths and symbols in all sorts of ways, there is no one scientifically valid interpretation.

V: You said in the lecture that you sometimes wear in the evening countryside a flute playing. Have you had that experience?

S: Yes, many a time.

V: Could you describe it.

S: Well it sounds just like a flute! The Meral or Bankse It sounds, very often the person who is playing it is not a great musician, but the flute has a very pleasant, plaintive sound. Just the sound of it, just someone playing it maybe not very skilfully is very pleasing. Especially when it is in the distance.

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V: I thought that you meant, when you said that, that it wasn't actually anybody physically playing it, that you were having a sort of experience of that call.

S: Well no (laughter) I don't think it was probably just some pheasant behind a bush, but what's the difference, you just use your imagination - it might be Krsna, ( ? been Krsna (Laughter) ( ? ) flute. When I was in ? ) I would sometimes hear someone down in the village at night playing a flute, well I thought it was just someone playing a flute but maybe it was Krsna playing a flute and I ought to have gone running down there, I probably didn't feel like a gopi. (Laughter)

Tejananda: Cittapala has a question on Ken Wilbur,

Cittapala: We were discussing the sections in your lecture about universalism and sectarianism and we were wondering in that connection; what is your opinion of Ken Wilbur's exposition of a hierarchy of psychological methods and religions corresponding to a hierarchy of consciousness, which seems to be an expression of Wilbur's view of the Higher Evolution of man. And secondly do you think Wilbur is a universalist or if not how would you categorise him?

S: I must say I have not read all his books, I have read about five of them. I don't remember all the details, but I think it is quite interesting the way in which he has tried to correlate certain psychological and spiritual disciplines with different stages in the development of consciousness. I think it is quite difficult to correlate religion~beyond a certain point because most major religions are really quite complex and comprise different levels within themselves anyway. For instance even in Catholicism there is someone like St. Theresa, well where would you put her? Do you see what I mean? So I think to correlate religion, apart from just classifying them as ethnic and ~universal would be a bit difficult. I don't think one could do it in any great detail. I think it is also interesting the way in which Wilbur has tried to correlate Freudian and Jungian psychology with different stages of spiritual development in the more traditional sense. I think he has probably done quite a good job there, at least made some very interesting suggestions. I must say, though, despite that, I don't agree with his basic philosophy. Despite his use of certain Buddhist terms his basic philosophy is Vedantic and not Buddhist; quite definitely and quite clearly. But that pertains to quite fundamental issues, and leaving those issues aside I think there is much that is generally useful and generally helpful and that one could perhaps incorporate. He certainly writes very well, he is very readable, he is very knowledgeable, has a quite active mind. So I think to be used with some discrimination.

Cittapala: So espousing the Vedanta philosophy would you give him a universalistic ...

S: No, when I say he is basically Vedantic I mean in the strict metaphysical sense. That is something which is

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difficult to go into in brief, but broadly speaking he sees the whole of existence as emanating

from the absolute and then returning to it, which is not the Buddhist view.

Tejananda: The final question from Prakasha concerns flying saucers.

Prakasha: This was prompted by the miraculous appearance of stupa (

S: Was it a flying saucer? (laughter)

Prakasha: The question is; just as mandalas appear within the unconscious of the individual as unifying integrative symbols what do you think of Jung's conception of flying saucers as being psychic symbols arising out of the collective unconscious and having a similar healing function?

S: I am not so sure that they are just psychic symbols. I don't exclude the possibility that they might be flying saucers, at least in some cases. I think it is very easy to explain things and explain them away. There are a lot of things going on nowadays that we don't fully understand. I can understand Jung's point of view, and I am quite sure that the sort of phenomenon that he describes often does occur but whether all cases of sightings of unidentified flying objects can be explained in that way, I don't know. Some of them could be angels, I mean after all one believes in angels doesn't one? They could even be flying saucers, it's not impossible. Some kind of highly sophisticated space craft from some distant planet and world technologically more advanced than we are, doesn't seem illogical or anything like that, impossible. So we can't rule that out all together, but nonetheless I am sure that Jung's theory does cover quite a lot of cases. After all, after reading the White Lotus Sutra you can believe in anything can't you. After reading the White Lotus Sutra it is easy to believe in flying saucers! Anyway we have covered quite a lot of ground this evening. When you all go back I hope you will try to stir up yourselves and your respective chapters. It is not the chapter convenors job to stir up the chapter he is just the messenger boy, the chapters have to stir themselves up. It usually just starts with one or two people I think, I imagine. But one can see that there is so much that we have to do and that we can do, which it would be useful to do, and it would be a pity not to take advantage of all the opportunities and facilities that we have, especially as we are young, most of us, most of you. I only wish I was thirty years younger because I am much more capable at sixty than I was at thirty, and I wish I was thirty because the opportunities nowadays are such that I could do so much more than I did when I was thirty. But I have to resign myself to the fact that I am double that age. But most of you are in your twenties and thirties, even those who are in their fifties, even they are still young and can do so much. So why waste any opportunities. Otherwise when you do reach old age you will regret it, you will certainly regret that you didn't make use of the opportunities that you had and you will see very clearly if it does unfortunately turn out to be the case, what opportunities you did had and how you didn't use them. And that will be a source of regret.

(end tape 6)

Tejananda: Tonight we've got thirteen question on myth and the return journey. The first one is from Abhaya and it is about books on the White Lotus Sutra.

Abhaya: I was in a book shop last week and I saw a book by the same publisher as the sutra, the Soothill one, which was a commentary by some Japanese Master on the whole Sutra. I just realised that I hadn't heard of any books on the White Lotus Sutra. I wondered whether you could advise us what would be good to read and what to avoid if we are studying the sutra in any detail.

S: I am afraid I am not aware of very much on the White Lotus Sutra at all, in English. I am not sure what the book is that you refer to, Is it one put out by a Japanese lay Buddhist organisation.

Abhaya: I think it possibly is.

S: Yes. I think we might have that one, I am not sure. But I think if it is that one then it is not especially interesting or relevant. It tends to be, their literature generally tends to be..., well it doesn't seem to go into Buddhism or into the sutra in any sort of spiritual depth. And it tends to be, I would say, quite superficial. Whatever is available there is no harm in having a look at it but I think that sort of literature on the White Lotus Sutra wouldn't be very helpful. But certainly keep one's eyes open for whatever might be available.

V: You did a review many years ago of Trivittika Master Pa~ first volume of the White Lotus Sutra. Doesn't that also have a commentary.

S: that's true, it days but again it is not very good. All of his commentaries are, one might say worse than useless. There are bits of information which are helpful, but what is a commentary? I would say that his works aren't commentaries at all. He talks at length about the sutras and all that's tape recorded and transcribed and edited and he draws his material from traditional Chinese sources but not in a way that is very helpful. He goes into far too much detail. For instance if Sariputra is mentioned he will stop and give a biography of Sariputra which is all right, but it doesn't help in the understanding of the sutra. There is no attempt to discuss for instance the significance of the figure of Sariputra in the sutra or anything of that sort. So I am afraid his productions generally aren't very useful though there may be items of information imbedded in them which are quite useful. But one has to dig those out, they are quite separate and independent and no light is thrown on the significance of the sutra as a whole, I would say, perhaps at all. So we are still awaiting proper studies of the sutra, studies which take the sutra seriously, both philosophically, spiritually and in terms of the development of Buddhism.

V: In Chinese is there any T'ien Tai material That you know of that could be translated?

S: I have seen references to such material but nothing

has been translated as far as I know. Maybe in some obscure learned journal there are translations but I haven't seen any. But in some ways that might not be a bad thing, because the sutra is not philosophically abstruse. It is in a way a work of religious or spiritual literature and I think you can approach it quite straightforwardly with the help of your general knowledge of Buddhism. I don't think you need specialist knowledge to understand it. The doctrinal portion is quite small, isn't it? It is a question of understanding the message of the sutra as communicated for its overall drama and its parables, myths and symbols. The doctrinal material, the specifically doctrinal material plays a comparatively small part. So I don't really think you need much in the way of commentary, perhaps. Perhaps one could write a commentary oneself. One of the things, perhaps, we could do, this just now occurred to me; we could from time to time have seminars or symposia on particular texts, like the White Lotus Sutra with different people speaking on different aspects of it. That could perhaps be very useful. Not just speaking but preparing proper talks or papers for it. So really there isn't any written literature, as far as I know, which would be very helpful to us in the study of this particular text. But perhaps it doesn't really matter very much.

Tejananda: The second question is from Cittapala about epic literature.

Cittapala: In the introduction to the lecture you list a series of examples of epic literature. I was wondering if there were any other examples apart from the Maha- barata and the Monkey from Oriental epic literature that you could recommend for us to read?

S: Epics. Well Chinese literature has no epics. I was going to say that the Chinese didn't go in for lengthy works. At least their classical literature doesn't but popular Chinese literature eventually did in the form of the novel or romance, some of them are very lengthy indeed but they are certainly not epics. The epic seems to be mainly an Indo-Aryan phenomenon. We have epics in German, we have epics in Scandinavian languages including Finnish. We have epics in Greek and Latin, we even have an epic or two in English. There is what is sometimes regarded as an epic in ancient Sumerian, that is the epic of Gilgamesh but it is more akin to say Theobald than it is say to the Iliad or the Odyssey. It is more a series of stories that have been pieced together, but it has certain epic qualities. Persian literature has of course the Shah Nameh which is often referred to as an epic but it isn't one continuous story any more than is the Rajataranginī in Sanskrit. The Maha- barata is certainly an epic, the Ramayana is too in a way though it is very different in character from the Mahabarata. If anyone is especially interested a friend sent me from India last year a very good book on the Mahabarata by a well known Marastrian writer. I forget her name, it's a lady, I think she is the daughter of the famous Dr Came or Dr Carb~ar I am not sure at the moment of which one. But it is an excellent study in the deeper significance of the Mahabarata, it goes into the story and the character in a very penetrating way, which is quite unusual in India. She has a close scholarly acquaintance with the original text. She is quite a good Sanskrit scholar but she has definite



literary interests and insights. It is the sort of work that one doesn't usually find in India. She is quite critical she shows difference in the Mahabarata and the Ramayana very clearly, she is quite contemptuous about the Ramayana - it's over optimistic view of things. She regards the Mahabarata as a much greater work and having an altogether more impressive philosophy which is (essentially?) bleak and tragic and according to her truer to the facts of life. It's an interesting work. You asked for other epics in oriental literature, well it is really only in India that we find epics as far as I can remember. The Mahabarata and the Ramayana chiefly. There are some literary epics, like some of the work of Kalidasa and his successors, but they are not really so well known. There is ( ? ) by Kalidasa, there is the Kumarasambhava Birth of the war God it's usually translated as which is an epic one could say, a literary epic. It's not translated into English as far as I know. So there is not really much, there is nothing of an epic nature in Arabic literature to the best of my knowledge.

Cittapala: I had a second part to the question which was that you talk about three sort of archetypes, the battle, the riddle and the journey. I was wondering whether you find yourself being personally drawn to any one of those during your life.

S: Well, I think I have experienced all three. I can't say I have been drawn particularly to any one. Yes, one does feel that life is a journey, one can feel that quite deeply but one can also feel that life is a battle, a battle with various outside forces. One can feel that very strongly and certainly one could say life is a problem, well not so much a problem, a riddle. I am not sure if I said in the lecture problem or riddle but I cited the book of Job, didn't I, which represents life as a riddle rather than life as a problem. I can't say that I felt any of those particularly though in some measure I have felt them all. There are quite a number of lesser known Greek epics. There is the epic on the Argonauts and I think there are various others, I can't remember what they are but they do exist. Or there is the Pharsalia of Lucan, which is unfinished, that has been translated into English several times.

Tejananda: The third question is from Prakasha on the subject of return.

Prakasha: It seems to me that there are two important complimentary models which describe the full predicament of man. The conceptual, linear model of the Higher Evolution and the cyclical myth of the fall, of descent and return. I am particularly thinking of the Gnostic myth as developed by Blake and the four Zoas. My questions are, to what extent is the myth of the fall in accord with the Dharma. Why it is underemphasised in the Buddhist tradition and should we incorporate it into our own approach since it is already an important part of Western culture do you think it would naturally be in to arise and have a place in Western Buddhism?

S: Let's take that little by little.

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Prakasha: It seems to me that there are two important complementary models that describe the predicament of man; the conceptual linear model of the Higher Evolution and the cyclical myth of the fall, of descent and return. Particularly the gnostic myth as developed by Blake and the four Zoas. So the first question, to what extent is the myth of the fall in accord with

the Dharma?

S: Well it isn't, it isn't. There is a myth of a fall in Wuddhist literature, in the Pali Canon. There is the Aganna-sutta (AN 3.63) of the Digha Nikaya, but what is that a fall from? It is not a fall, so to speak from the absolute, it is a fall from a higher plane of being but from a plane of being which is still, according to the text as we had it, within the mundane sphere. So there is no question in the case of Buddhism of a fall from an original state of perfection, that is impossible, really, according to Buddhism, though Buddhism doesn't quite put it in that way. But the very nature of Buddhism makes it impossible. For instance there is no question of, could a Buddha fall, a Buddha by very definition cannot fall. There is no fall from the state of Enlightenment, there is no fall from the state of perfection. So there is no question of a fall of that kind in the beginning, according to Buddhism. There can only be a fall as between relatively high and relatively lower states within the samsara itself, and that is actually what one finds in Buddhism. Do you see what I mean? In terms of ultimate beginnings, well Buddhism doesn't recognise an ultimate first beginning anyway. So there can't really be any question of everything starting with an original fall, whether of man or anybody else. So that is why I say this idea of a fall is in accordance in the Dharma and it isn't in accordance with the Dharma. If it is within the mundane, as between higher and lower levels it is in accordance with the Dharma but if it is conceived as a fall from the absolute, from a state of perfection, then according to Buddhism that is self contradictory. That kind of fall is not in accordance with the Dharma. So what was the next question?

Prakasha: The next question was, why is it underemphasised in the Buddhist tradition?

S: Well, for that reason. Because what is the significance, There are ups and downs within the samsara, you go up and you come down hundreds and thousands of times, so there is particular emphasis on that coming down, from a higher realm, a devaloka or brahmaloka to the human world.

Prakasha: What place has it then in that particular sutta that describes the fall from the brahmalokas?

S: It describes that as occurring, as far as I remember, at The beginning of the world period when beings, that have so to speak remained over from a previous evolutionary period or previous cycle of evolution and involution~ begin to descend and are attracted by the evolving material universe and so to speak incarnate in it, become merged with it to some extent So far the picture is identical with that of other traditions but Buddhism doesn't regard it as a fall from a state of perfection. But certainly a fall from a higher level within the samsara. And there are all sorts of metaphysical implications but one can't really go into them now.

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Padmavajra: Just a question about that, not about the Gandha sutta but about the use then of the parable of the return journey. I fully realise that it is a parable and that one shouldn't draw

metaphysical conclusions from it but the question arises, why not just use the image of the journey and why is it somehow with my own case, and I think other people found it, why is it that somehow the return journey, using the idea of return has such an emotional appeal? More of an appeal, I think than for me just the use of the term journey.

S: Well, it could be something to do with going back to the womb you know! (Laughter)

Padmavajra: But assuming that it isn't that ...

S: I think I have gone into that in the lecture, because Thsaid it is not a return journey in the sense of the going back into the past; didn't I say that? It is going 'back' (single inverted commas) to something which is outside time. So you can think of that absolute, that x factor or whatever it is as being above you, or you can think of it as being deep within you, or you can even think of it as something which you have left behind, as it were. You can't help putting it in some relation to space and time. So therefore within the Buddhist context the return journey is not literally to something which was there in the beginning. You return to it not by going back to the beginning of things, not travelling backwards in time, but by going out of time altogether - do you see what I mean? So if we think of time as a sort of process, well how do we think of the absolute in relation to that? We can think of it as above the temporal process, but that is spatial terminology, or before it, well that is temporal terminology. It doesn't really matter, if one has more emotional resonance for you than another well by all means make use of that particular terminology or that particular symbolism, but be careful how you interpret it in conceptual terms.

Kulamitra: But if that is so, the way you answered Prakasha's question was in terms of doctrinal matters, in a way. If one were to take some of the myths of a fall, not as literal or doctrinal, but in that sense - that there was some meaning, as in a parable. Is there anything wrong with that approach, if you can't help but think of it in that way?

S: I think I have mentioned this too, in the lecture, you can think of the fall as occurring outside time - do you see what I mean? Even in Crossing the Stream I have said something about the fall occurring every instant. I have spoken of their being a fall every time in dependence upon feeling there arises craving, instead of faith. So what about this, what I have called, the emotional resonance of the idea of a return journey. Where do you think that comes from? Because clearly at present there is some distance between oneself and 'it'; so you can think of the distance as being as it were spatial. 'It' is up there, out of your reach. Or you can think of the distance as being as it were temporal, 'it' is back there, or even in front there, or even underneath.

Kulamitra: Maybe it is because all though you are

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alienated from that thing if you imagine it in your past you are suggesting to yourself that actually it is accessible to you. In a way if you have experienced it before you can experience it again. Whereas maybe if you put it in front you don't really know that. Maybe it has got that sort of

S: But in what sense have you experienced it before, if a fall from the absolute to the relative is not logically possible, according to Buddhism.

Kulamitra: Ah, but you are not really suggesting that; you are using that temporal sequence to suggest what usually - you talk about it in terms of potential -

S: Right, there is an image of closeness one might say. (K: Yes) It suggests the possibility of contact, suggests that there is a real possibility. That in a sense, in a very, very vestigial way you are in contact already.

V: It's almost; well it, is a similar way of speaking that it's there all the time and you have just got to wake up to it.

S: In a sense yes. V: Rather than ( ? )

Dhammarati: It would be worth, I think, kind of suggesting in our study group this morning, that that image actually does parallel one's experience. That it is almost like the experience of separation when it gets less the experience is one of coming into touch with something deeply familiar rather than something absolutely brand new.

S: Yes, well one could say both. Or do you think it has anything to do with the experience of childhood, I mean very early childhood?

V: What, innocence?

S: Yes, a sort of blissful state. Do you think it has got anything to do with that? Does one unconsciously harken to those very early days of sort of oceanic oneness?

Dhammarati: I wondered if it was more that you start to see that the way you usually things in terms of your separation from them, as you start to see past that it's almost that you see that it wasn't the case. You move towards something more fundamentally real. So that it's not really that they you are moving towards an experience that you had in your own psychological past but you are pushing beyond something that you have almost artificially constructed back to a more fundamentally real experience that in a sense actually has always been there.

Kulamitra: I would have thought, actually, that as it were that childhood memory..., one doesn't really remember it, I would have thought that does actually give it quite a lot of its emotional motor. But in a way through the myth you are turning that around. Because I have noticed a lot of people confuse preconscious with almost post personal

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conscious. But I think through the myth that it is clear that that isn't the case, you are not just going back to the womb but maybe you are making use of that impulse and turning it around and allowing it to move you in the direction that you really have to go.

S: Yes, you are as it were getting in touch with the emotions That are bound up with that very early state and that cannot but be a positive thing because you can then link something that is very deep and very basic in yourself with you spiritual quest, your spiritual aspiration. And you take along with you all your early childhood feelings. I have thought, this is going off the track a little, but it wouldn't be a bad thing to try, from time to time, just to get back into contact with those very early childhood feelings. Because I think in almost all cases they must have been intensely pleasurable, though perhaps afterwards overlaid, perhaps rather quickly overlaid with experiences which were much less pleasurable. But I think one's very earliest conscious experience must have been very pleasurable indeed, perhaps more pleasurable than anything that one has experienced since, in the majority of cases.

Dharmadhara: Why do you say that?

S: Say what, which part of the statement?

Dharmadhara: Say that those earliest experiences must be intensely pleasurable, for most people.

S: I think it is mainly on account of the experience of oneness, or relative oneness with the mother, and the emotional satisfaction that one gets out of that. I have thought in the course of the last few years that probably the relationship with the mother is the most important emotional experience in one's life, in the ordinary way, leaving aside spiritual developments. Perhaps that isn't a very popular point of view but sometimes it's as though even in the course of one's adult relationships one is very often only looking for some sort of approximation to that. Because it was so intensely blissful, so secure, so satisfying, so uncomplicated - in most cases, in almost~all cases. I think if it wasn't we probably couldn't survive very long.

Suvajra: How do you suggest getting back in touch with these feelings, because the connotations of such language 'getting back in touch with those early experiences'

S: I think you can try to remember. (S: Just remember?) Try to remember. You may be able to or you may not be able to but I think in at least some cases one can. I think this is one of the things that probably bedevils a lot of relationships especially with members of the opposite sex, perhaps especially in the case of men. That quite deep feelings connected with one's mother in the past, or even the present, of which one is not fully conscious, get projected onto one's adult female partner. Perhaps not necessarily even in the context of a sexual relationships, perhaps sometimes in some other context. One doesn't always realise what powerful emotional forces are involved.

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Suvajra: Do you think recollection of those early experiences would help you withdraw that projection.

S: I am not prepared to say that at this stage. I am still Thinking about it, but I think it

would help. I think also it is not a question of remembering an experience, I think perhaps there is no question of an experience unless perhaps something of a traumatic nature happened to interrupt your enjoyment of that sort of contact - maybe you were whipped off to hospital to have your tonsils out or something of that sort. But otherwise there would not be any particular experience, it is more like recollecting or remembering your experience of a state. It is not a question of remembering something that happened, at that sort of period things don't happen in that sort of way, or if they do it is usually something traumatic, it's traumatic because it is an interruption of that sort of state. But if one can get back to and have some intimation of that state before any sort of traumatic experience arose it may be - some people it arises quite early. I think there is a suspicion that the first really traumatic experience is when one is weaned. Those who have had children and have had an opportunity to observe these things might have something to say, but I gather for many children weaning is a quite difficult business - they don't want to be weaned for quite obvious reasons. Some of course aren't weaned, they are never taken Abreast because they were never put to it, they were artificially fed from the beginning and perhaps that isn't a good thing. There isn't the fullness of the emotional experience then. I say emotional but even that word isn't applicable at that stage, it is something much more basic than what we normally call emotion. But I think in the case of people who have experienced that in a healthy positive way there's a quite deep even primitive level of their being where they are still vaguely aware of that and perhaps therefore vaguely looking for it. Especially perhaps in some cases vaguely looking for it in the women in their lives. And if you observe women with babies, how do they behave with babies? They are totally absorbed in them, it's almost a lover like relationship which they have with them, ( ? ) infatuation and engrossment. So how does the baby feel, being at the other end of all that! The baby probably feels great! (laughter) You can see it on the babies face sometimes, the baby really enjoys it and everybody has gone through that at some stage or other and it must have left some trace in one's psyche, a trace that perhaps still persists. So it is good to get in touch with that, and I think probably it does help one in withdrawing projections, possibly, from women. Though I don't want to overwork the projection hypothesis.

~ra: Do you personally recall such a state?

S: I can't say that I recall very clearly but if I go back as far as I can, which is not all that far, I have the sort of impression that I did have a quite happy childhood, including early childhood. I can't say that I'd be able to achieve a very definite actual recollection of that early stage. It is more a matter of inference than anything else. But I must say, not that I have made a very special effort to push the frontiers back, as it were. It is only this last two or three years that I have been thinking about these things. Therefore, I think whether in early life or adult life

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a negative emotional relationship with or attitude towards one's biological mother is a sign of something very seriously wrong, from a psychological point of view, and therefore something to be worked upon if one possibly can at least from one's own end. Perhaps it is significant that Tibetan tradition advises us to regard all sentient beings as our mothers, as having been our mothers. And it is very difficult for a young man if mother actually emotionally hangs

on to him, or tries to hang on to him as he grows up in the way that she did when he was a baby. In the way that Lawrence's mother seems to have done, that can be pretty disastrous for one's emotional development. But perhaps we needn't go into that, I think it is sufficiently well known and obvious.

Kulamitra: Perhaps that is one of the strong points of a return journey myth, is that it is a synthesis of those early feelings you described (S: Right, yes) but with your feeling that you want to be an individual and that you want to actually emerge. You also want to join. Because the return is made by an adult, and quite clearly if you identify with that person in the story you are identifying with a self-conscious person, but it still has that impulse of joining.

S: As I said it is important to carry one's emotions, especially one's basic and more primitive emotions, along with one. And one can do that to a large extent in this way.

Tejananda: Now a question from Ratnaguna about the composition of sutras.

Ratnaguna: The question is actually about Sariputra, Subhuti and Ananda in the Mahayana sutras. I was struck when reading part of the sutra that Sariputra actually seems a very positive character, but am I right in saying that in other Mahayana sutras he is not so positive but a bit slow on the uptake? I wondered if that suggested that the White Lotus Sutra was a bit more positive as regards getting Hinayanists into a more Ekayana point of view. Because he is the first one to be predicted as a Buddha isn't he~

S: Of course one could say that was because he was the Buddha's chief disciples. He was one of the two chief disciples, but even as between those two he was even more important than Mahamoggallana, so perhaps he is predicted first for that sort of reason, possibly.

Ratnaguna: Another thing I was thinking of was, Subhuti is a very minor figure in the White Lotus Sutra but he is more prominent in the Perfection of Wisdom. I wondered why that was.

S: Difficult to say, we know so little about the circumstances under which Mahayana sutras were composed and by whom, so to speak. There might be some internal clue, if one went through the literature very closely. But yes, Subhuti does feature quite prominently in the Perfection of Wisdom literature as does Sariputra but in a quite different sort of way.

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Ratnaguna: And where is Ananda?

S: Ananda seems to have had, in a way, a rather good press in the Mahayana. I sometimes think, even reading the Pali Canon, Ananda seems rather like an insipid Mahayanist. But in the Mahayana sutras he doesn't seem to have any particular role, though he is sometimes an interlocutor. There is of course the Surangama sutra, that is the Chinese composition, not the real original sutra, there is an apocryphal Chinese Surangama sutra, or Surangama samadhi sutra in which Ananda is represented as in danger of falling into the clutches of Pchiti, and

Manjusri has to be sent off to rescue him. So sometimes Ananda is depicted as someone who has something of a weakness of the opposite sex. This is perhaps in line with his overall character, he is a warm sympathetic sort of character. In the Pali Canon it is he that pleads, in effect, that women may be allowed to go forth and follow the spiritual path as Bharivajicas And Huan Chang I think it is, informs us that when they had processions in his day in India, the sramaneras; apparently bhikkhus, sramaneras, bhikshunis all sort of marched in a regular sort of way in the procession; where the sramaneras all carried an image of Rahula, the bhikshunis, the nuns, always carried an image of Ananda, they regarded him as their special sort of patron. Because it is due to his intercession that there was a bhikshuni sangha at all, apparently. So he has that sort of.., the general characters of a warm, devotional or sympathetic person. Sometimes those qualities are represented as a strength, sometimes as rather a weakness. But that is the general sort of character type of Ananda, as it emerges, not only in the Mahayana sutras but to some extent in the Pali Canon as well. It would be rather an interesting study to trace the development of the principle disciples of the Buddha from their beginnings in the Pali Canon where they are historical figures more or less, through into the Mahayana sutras where they are taken up and given a different kind of treatment. Sometimes in accordance with their original characters, sometimes not.

(end of side 1)

Tejananda: Now a question from Virananda about allegory.

Virananda: The Christian religious tradition gained inspiration from earlier and foreign literature by interpreting

S: Which literature are you referring to?

Virananda: I have in mind the Christian interpretations of say the Greek myths as they came down to them, particularly through the intermediary of Ovid, his metamorphosis.

S: Usually of course Christian thinkers were concerned with giving allegorical interpretations of Old Testament myths and legends. Because some Christian thinkers took the view that the activities of the gods and goddesses of Greek and Roman mythology simply of demons and then they did attempt to allegorize them. And the Greeks themselves already started the allegorization of their own myths, the neo-Platonists did this especially, Porphyry did this. So I wouldn't say that the Christian thinkers, the Christian fathers went in for

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the allegorization of pagan myths to any great extent, they were more concerned with the



allegorization, among other things, of the Old Testament stories. Anyway what is the question that that lead on to?

Virananda; Could you comment on the use of allegory or

S: I think allegory is quite important. I think one has to understand what allegory really means. I think the word is used quite loosely. Strictly speaking allegory means the personification of certain abstract qualities and then making the personifications behave in a way that illustrates the relationships between those qualities. I think that one of the best allegories that we have in English is Pilgrim's Progress. It might be Johnson or Foster explains allegory in this sort of way: Supposing you want to describe some sort of moral conflict. Well you have your hero, perhaps you call him Everyman, and then someone comes along to him called Temptation, and Temptation speaks to Everyman and tries to persuade him to do something but then another character comes along called Good Counsel and advises him not to do that thing. Then another character intervenes called Conscience and reinforces what Good Counsel says but then another character then comes along called Pleasure and Everyman is swayed in the other direction. So this is allegory. So that is a distinct literary form. So when we speak of the allegorization of myths and legends we are not really thinking of that form, we are using the expression allegorisation in a very loose and perhaps even incorrect way. Do you see what I mean? But anyway, so called allegorisation really means that kind of interpretation of myths and legends and symbols which tries to see in them or evoke from them a meaning which is deeper than the surface meaning and more acceptable. So I think that sort of allegorisation is extremely important as a means of preserving continuity of tradition and reflecting the developing consciousness, especially developing spiritual consciousness of the individual or the group. Supposing say, as an ancient Greek, you have got various myths, various stories about your gods and goddesses. But some of those stories, some of the things that those gods and goddesses do are in conflict with your own moral sense. So what are you to do, you can either stifle your moral sense and continue to take those stories literally or you can heed the dictates of your moral sense to such an extent that you reject the gods and goddesses, reject the myths and legends on moral grounds, those are the two ( ? ). Or you can follow a middle way and you can interpret the myths and legends in such a way that your moral sense, or your developing spiritual sense is no longer offended. That is really what we call allegorisation is all about. So that contributes to continuity of tradition. It enables you to remain in touch with your own tradition and in a sense faithful to it, while not having to accept it in its literal sense which is offensive to you.

So you are able to grow, at the same time you remain in contact with your tradition. This is an almost universal process; as people's development, the old myths in their literal acceptance become unacceptable. The Greeks did this on quite an extensive scale with their myths and legends.

Virananda: I think you've answered the second half of my question as well.

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S: Could I just illustrate that. It just occurred to me, for instance in the White Lotus Sutra

itself, we find the Buddha putting out his tongue. We find his tongue encircling the universe. Well, this is really quite grotesque in a way, it offends our aesthetic sense also, but can we take it literally? One could say, well the Buddha is obviously illustrating, or the sutra is illustrating the power and the importance of speech, and doing it in a way that perhaps the Indian mentality, or ancient Indian mentality find acceptable, which we really don't find acceptable. We certainly can't take it literally, and we aren't even very happy with the imagery itself. So we have to do the best we can with it, we certainly have to allegorise it, do you see what I mean. We can't possibly take it literally.

Virananda: I was going to also ask. To what extent are the parables found in the White Lotus Sutra intended by their author to be interpreted allegorically?

S: I don't think authors of parables think in that way. They're as though parables do have many different levels of meaning and it's very doubtful I think, whether the authors of parables consciously distinguish those different levels of meaning. To take another sort of example, commentators on Shakespeare's plays have read all sorts of profound meanings into them. I don't mean just abstract philosophical meanings but they have interpreted them, haven't they, interpreted their imagery. Interpreted the significance of the various characters and it is very very doubtful whether those meanings were consciously present to Shakespeare's mind when he composed those plays. That is not to say that those meanings are not in the plays and cannot validly be found there, or validly be considered to be contained within them. But it is very doubtful whether Shakespeare apprehended those meanings in the way that we do when we study those plays. It is almost as though he had a higher kind of perception which included those meanings in a non-conceptual sort of way. I think it is much the same with the author, so to speak, of the parables, myths and symbols of the White Lotus Sutra. I think you can actually construct a myth, or construct a legend but I think that is a quite artificial procedure, it probably doesn't have the same kind of appeal, the same kind of impact. Some poets have tried to create myths of their own but they are usually not very successful, they usually prefer quite wisely to work with traditional material and give some sort of shape to that.

Virananda: There is a bit more to it, you might already have seen it. To what extent can the sutra or ought it to be interpreted allegorically after perhaps first absorbing it on a more imaginative non-rational level?

S: I think you will start, as it were, interpreting it, allegorising it when you feel a need to do so. If you don't feel a need to do so well don't bother. I think a lot of people reading, say, the White Lotus Sutra, reading the parables, myths and symbols of the White Lotus Sutra will quite spontaneously start trying to interpret, trying to allegorise, partly as a means of getting more deeply to grips with the material, engaging with it at a deeper level. Not just for its own sake, as it were, or with any idea of explaining the

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parables, myths and symbols away. I think if you do try to understand the parables, myths

and symbols, or interpret them, or to allegorize them—so to speak, in the way that we have been talking of—you do in the end have a deeper and a fuller experience of those parables, myths and symbols themselves. It's not that you cease to experience them as parables, myths and symbols. I think, after allegorizing them you should experience them more deeply, more profoundly, more strongly. Do you find this, or do you feel this? Not only with regards, say to the sutra but with regard to any other sort of parable or myth or legend that you have tried to understand, and tried to get to grips with in this sort of way.

Suvajra: With allegory being so important has Buddhist tradition had recourse to allegory in any particular texts?

S: I can't recollect. I don't think that Buddhist myths and symbols have been studied in this sort of way in the East, as far as I recollect. I think more often than not they were just taken literally. Well we can't quite do that for obvious reasons and therefore we are sort of forced into allegorization, they didn't feel any incongruity. They perhaps could take quite literally the statement that the Buddha protruded his tongue and it encircled the universe. We don't have that sort of faith, unfortunately. So we are obliged to allegorize so that we are sure that we don't feel alienated from the sutras. And allegorization comes with a certain amount of intellectual sophistication, usually.

Dhammarati: Do you feel there is a risk of losing something of the complexity, the ambiguity of an image by going for a one to one correspondence?

S: It isn't such a simple matter as a one to one correspondence. I think the more deeply one goes into a myth or a symbol the more one realises how multi-faceted and multi-layered it is. It is not a question of saying it means this so you can forget about the myth itself because now you've grasped in conceptual terms what it was trying in its inadequate way to say. (laughter) It is not that at all. That is much more like allegorization in the strict sense, a one to one correspondence. I mean, a woman 'in deshabille' represents Temptation with a capital 'T' and full stop that is all. Well it isn't as simple as that in the case of real myth and legend and parable and so on.

Tejananda: The next question is from Dhammaloka. Psychological attitudes of servants and sons.

Dhammaloka: In our study group we have been discussing

parable. It seemed to us that being a servant has become quite a discredited thing in the West while at the same time the son and father relationships don't seem to flourish either. Would you please comment on a. the psychological attitudes of servants and sons in a spiritual context in general. b. on whether (and how) we should improve in this respect in the FWBO.

S: Servant and son. Well a servant is one who serves. So

why should one serve, from a spiritual point of view. What does service mean? Well service means you do something for somebody else. More often than not perhaps it is something which he could just as well do for himself, is able to do it. In the old days perhaps a servant polished his masters shoes, his master was quite capable of polishing his own shoes, at least one would hope he was, but he doesn't do it, he is the master you are the servant, so you do it. By why are you the servant and why is he the master? Sometimes it is because he pays you to be the servant, he has got more money than you. But I would say that is not a real servant and master relationship. I think a real servant and master relationship implies that the master is really superior and perhaps even you gain by serving him. That you cannot do what he is able to do, so you do for him the things that you can do for him, which perhaps he can do for himself but which he shouldn't in a sense be allowed to do for himself because he has got something more important to do which you can't do. So you understand this and you therefore gladly and happily serve him so that he can devote himself to something that you can't do. Because if you share the same common ideals in a way indirectly through him, you, are serving the same ideal that he is serving. Because without you he couldn't devote himself to that ideal as much as he is now able to inasmuch as he can depend upon your services. I think this is the natural servant/master relationship. But if it's based merely on economic considerations it can obviously be merely exploitive.

In the old days it was bound up with feudal loyalty and that had many positive elements, because your feudal superior was the one who protected you. You couldn't protect yourself, you didn't have the resources, you didn't have the strength. But he could protect you, therefore you placed yourself under his protection, he saved you, he guarded your life perhaps with his own life sometimes. So in the return for that you placed yourself at his disposal in certain other respects. Do you see what I mean? So what was a more natural type of relationship, you recognised his superiority in a certain sense. And of course in India, in pre-Buddhistic times even, the disciple served his master, served his teacher in that sort of way. NoL only lived with him in his house if he was a householder, or in his monastery if he was a monk, but served him at the same time. I believe in Tibetan they have words which mean both disciple and servant. I think that was also the custom in the West in some of the monastic orders. I think there was the survival of it in some of our English Universities when there was someone called a sizar who served in the college, served the food and things of that sort in return for free board and lodging and tuition. So I think that was a survival from some medieval tradition.

Going back to India, under the Brahminical system, under the Vedic tradition, if you wanted to be accepted by someone as a disciple you went to see him, you went to his house but on the way you gathered some sticks and you brought those sticks in your hand you offered them to him. So that was expressive of your readiness to serve him, because you would expect to serve him if he taught you, and you would serve in the most simple, basic way. You would go and fetch water, you would gather sticks and things of that sort, take perhaps the cattle out to graze. And when you had done all that you would sit down at the teachers feet and maybe you'd be taught the mantras of the Veda and given some explanation, and so on. But clearly we have got rather out of touch with that tradition,

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because these days due to all sorts of egalitarian ideas which are very predominant people don't like to think that anybody is superior to them in any essential way and therefore they don't like to serve in this more basic, genuine sense. I talked in my FWBO anniversary lecture about the Mitras taking responsibility for things which the Order Members could admittedly do, but if they hadn't to do which they would be freer for things which the Mitras couldn't do. So in a way that meant the Mitras serving the Order Members, though I didn't use that term. This is what it would really mean, especially as the Mitra would have broadly the same ideal as the Order Member and therefore could understand that it could be a very worthy contribution helping the Order Member to devote himself the ideal for everybody's benefit in a way that the Mitra himself couldn't do. In some ways, at its best, that is the sort of rational behind the relationship between the tipasaka and the bhikshu; the upasaka serves the bhikshu and helps him do the things that the upasaka himself doesn't feel able to do. But unfortunately in more recent times this developed into the bhikshu almost living the Buddhist lives vicariously on the layman's behalf and the layman just making merit by serving the bhikshu instead of actually trying to follow the spiritual path himself. But nonetheless there is an element of that more genuine relationship or attitude. Anyway, let's get back to the question. That was only part of it wasn't it; the other was the son. I think in modern times very few people knows what it means to be a son. In earlier times relationships between fathers and sons were sometimes very, very strong. I think they are still strong but the strength of that particular relationship is not recognized very often and it very often takes a negative turn, partly for that reason and partly for certain other reasons. In ancient times very often the man regarded his son as himself reborn, as his heir, as his continuator, even as the one whose services after his death was going to ensure that he attained heaven. One mustn't also forget that in ancient times, until very recently, people didn't understand the nature of conception or the real nature of the part played by the female. It was thought that the impregnation of the female was simply like planting seed in a field, that the son, especially, didn't inherit anything from the mother, he inherited from the father. Because the female was just like the earth, just like the soil, merely supplied nutriment. So therefore, all the more the child, especially the son, was related to the father very very closely indeed, was not really regarded as a joint product of both parents. There is a great imbalance there. So the relationship between father and child, and especially father and son was very, very close indeed. And this comes out sometimes in ancient literature, sometimes even in not so ancient literature. Even some Victorian novels you see the deep attachment of the father to the son, sometimes even in an unhealthy way. For instance think of *Dombey and Son* by Dickens, and think of *Clayhanger* by Arnold Bennett. I remember there was an interview some years ago by a white woman journalist with that famous black boxer - what was his name (V: Mohammed Ali) Mohammed Ali, that's right, she asked him why he didn't marry a white girl, and he said very indignantly, 'Well I want to have a son that looks like me'. He wanted a son that was absolutely black, not one that was brown or yellow or white. That is

in a way the instinct of the male, of the father, to have son that's like him, that is a sort of continuation of him, in whom he can see himself. So sometimes fathers can be very attached to their sons, often without the son really knowing it or appreciating it, and perhaps fathers do project quite a lot onto their sons. In a sense, though, one mustn't overdo this hypothesis of projection, but sometimes fathers do try to live their lives and fulfil their ambitions through their sons. For instance men love to see their son taking over the family business, the son succeeding to the chairmanship of the firm and the father retiring - sometimes he genuinely retires, sometimes he doesn't retire and tries to run the whole show still. And is still more pleased to see his grandson succeeding. But that sort of satisfaction fathers don't usually get these days, do they, the sons don't want to do what father wants them to do, in fact sometimes they take a delight in doing the very things that father doesn't want them to do. So there is a loss of contact sometimes, with the father, it psychologically isn't all that good. But the individual who wants to be an individual has to make a break in a sense, both with father and with mother, but at the same time as an individual, needs to try to maintain some kind of positive connection without forfeiting his individuality and that isn't easy. Sometimes it is a fight, a struggle between parents and children. The children, perhaps, in some cases at least wanting to be individuals and the parents wanting to dominate them and lead their lives or continue to lead their lives through the children. So we are in a quite difficult position, it seems, these days. In the old days perhaps there wasn't much option, ( ? ) inevitable that the son should follow in father's footsteps but very often there was no other possibility, no other option.

Suvajra: You've spoken earlier on about the relationship with mother affecting adult relationships say perhaps in the spiritual life. Can you say how the relationship of the son with father affects your relationships within the Order, within the FWBO?

S: It is very difficult to see what is cause and what is effect. I think in many ways the relationship with father is less basic, less primitive, than the relationship with mother. Because I think you become aware as father as a separate being later than you become aware of mother, as such. But, yes, the relationship with father starts very early and therefore does influence you and if you rebel against father it is likely that you rebel against anyone that you see as occupying a father like position. Hence, presumably, all the revolts against authority we see. And within the Movement, even within the Order I am sometimes surprised how sensitive people are, how almost pathologically sensitive to any suggestion of authority. On the part of other, perhaps senior and more experience, or older Order Members. Sometimes their reactions seem completely unreasonable. I really have been quite astonished sometimes at the strength of certain people's reactions in the face of no provocation at all. When someone perhaps hasn't been behaving in the least in an authoritarian manner, but is experienced apparently as behaving in that manner. I am really surprised by this sometimes. I really wonder what is behind it, it seems out of all proportion, not only to the provocation given,

especially when there was no provocation, but to anything that might have happened in that person's past history. Because often you discover that their father is quite decent chap and they had quite a good time at school, not particular troubles with teachers, but nonetheless they do have this very, very deep seated attitude, that can be sparked almost at the slightest provocation. YOU know the sort of thing I am talking about, you might well have encountered or observed it, I really don't understand where it comes from. It is encouraged, no doubt, by our pseudo-egalitarian, anti-authoritarian ideology in which we are steeped, or at least by which we are surrounded.

V: Do you think maybe it is because perhaps in some sense people haven't really had a father in that they have never really had somebody who has given them conditional love rather than unconditional love. They haven't have somebody who has given them parameters in their early life?

S: I think this is true but then one would expect them to be Thoking for those parameters, but it is as though they are rejecting something all the more strongly for not having had it. Which is I think a psychological possibility, but that would lead us into rather deep waters and I don't feel that I can really sort of dogmatize. But I certainly have observed the phenomena which I described, I really have wondered about them.

Dhammarati: Could I just say a brief word in favour of reaction against authority. I wonder how many people in this room it has been their experience that the father has resisted their move towards spiritual development, given the values of this culture almost as a matter of circumstance we've had to reject the guidelines and the parameters laid down by fathers. To some extent ...

S: I took that into consideration when I said that their reaction seemed out of all proportion to any sort of provocation that they might have received. Even accepting that their might have been quite oppressive or actually an authoritarian character, but nonetheless that doesn't seem to account for the extremeness of their reaction~when no provocation has been given.

Dhammaloka: One of the things that struck me very strongly about this image of the son is, presumably the son does experience, I don't know whether familiarity is the right word or a sense of affinity, a likeness with his father. A sense of being of the same origin. And I wondered if one rejects what appears to us just mere authority this sense of likeness is lacking, is missing.

S: Well it didn't happen in the past, apparantly, so one wonders why it should happen in the present, there must be other reasons. Because in the past for the reasons I mentioned the son had even stronger reasons for feeling similar to or identical with his father, the father with his son. But I think we should certainly take note of what actually does happen and fight it in ourselves and in others. This over-reaction; no, I won't say over-reaction to authority because one perhaps is justified in reacting, if that is the

word, against actual authority in the negative sense of the term - that is to say oppressive authority. But that suggests one can see what is authority but if you can't see what isn't authority perhaps you can't really see what is authority. You can sometimes see that people are very quick to react against what they label as authoritarianism can in certain other ways be quite slavish in their attitude to other authorities.

V: Do you detect people who react to people who they think are being authoritarian who aren't who aren't, do you ever detect that they are actually people who are quite authoritarian themselves?

S: I'm not sure about that. Something that I have noticed 1W that they often seem to be what I would describe as weak characters, not strong characters.

Kulamitra: I think I could say that I have observed that sometimes people who try and stop any authoritative figure emerging in a group situation, are people who obviously - they actually are quite manipulative of a group situation, it is their way of maintaining power ....

S: Or exercising power, yes that's true.

Kulamitra: In that sense I have found people who are apparently anti-authoritarian, but it is certainly not as if ....

S: It is really a technique of fighting you. (K: Yes) They profess to be against the power mode and therefore they are against authority but actually they feel that they are weak or they are not very co~ageous, so that is their manipulative way of exercising power and undermining you and defeating you. I think this definitely does happen, yes. So some anti-authoritarianism is in fact concealed not exactly authoritarianism because it isn't overt, but it is certainly a concealed operation in accordance with the power mode, or in terms of the power mode. "You are authoritarian I am open minded, I am receptive, I am liberal minded, I am egalitarian, I am democratic."

Suvajra: Thinking about the other aspect about the father and son relationship, I am not exactly sure how I am going to put this, but most of us are going to be older males in the Order without children, so how do you think the paternal aspect - us looking for someone to inherit - will affect our friendships and relationships?

S: I think yes, as you get older you are sure to have a more paternal attitude towards Mitras and therefore be more inclined to do something for them. As everybody knows, I hope, Mitras are rather neglected at the moment, and feel neglected by Order Members and I think it is partly perhaps because a lot of Order Members are around the same age as the Mitras or maybe not much older and so I suppose they don't have much of a paternal feeling towards the Mitras of the same sex, or the opposite sex come to that, though that is a little more complicated, obviously. I think in the lives of even most Order Members their most important relationship



is still with somebody of the opposite sex and I think that is a great sort of weakening factor. But I think as you get older that sort of polarization becomes less and I think perhaps then your more paternal feelings can come into play and then you can perhaps take a more active interest in a more natural way in the younger generation. But I do get the impression with even many Order Members, if it is a choice between spending time with a Mitra or spending with your girlfriend then the Mitra loses almost every time. I hear of people going off for holidays with girl friends, but it is a long time since I heard of an Order Member going off for a holiday with a Mitra. °The last time was just a few days ago, a woman Order Member going off on holiday with a woman Mitra and I was quite pleased because it is quite an unusual thing nowadays. I don't remember the last time I heard of a male Order Member taking a male Mitra away on holiday and clearly that would be the best way of consolidating a spiritual friendship. Maybe it has happened without my knowing but I haven't heard, but I have certainly heard several instances of Order Members taking their girl- friends away. Sometimes the girl-friend happens to be a Mitra but I don't really count that (Laughter) perhaps ~rori~ly but I don't. Mitras don't seem to play a very important part in the personal lives of Order Members. I think still Mitras, judging by the amount of attention they receive are regarded as more of a duty than a pleasure to be with, and that is very unfor- tunate. I think that is one of the reasons why Mitras usually come on quite slowly and why we don't have more of them, or why more Friends don't become Mitras, Mitras don't develop more quickly. I think most Order Members, frankly, and I am talking about men Order Members, the woman are rather better I must say, most male Order Members don't take their relationships with the men Mitras very, very seriously.

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The male Order Members who take their relationships with their men Mitras most seriously seem to be those Order Members who have a sort of knack of feeling some kind of sexual attraction or even, if I may use the expression, falling in love a little bit, and use that as a means of developing a closer relationship with the Mitra. But if that doesn't happen, if the Mitra doesn't attract or inspire the Order Member in that way well not very much happens it seems. Which is rather interesting. But anyway this is all by the way, as it were. So there really needs to be a much stronger feeling on the part of Order Members for Mitras, so that they put the Mitras, and having contact with the Mitras much nearer the centre of their personal Mandala. At the moment the Mitras, I think, are rather towards the circumference. One does spend some time with Mitras in some cases but it is very often out of a sense of duty, it is what you ought to do and are expected to do, not that you really want to, you really look forward to seeing them or try to find time to spend with them: that doesn't happen much. But it is partly because most male Order Members being so young feel quite strongly the pull of the opposite sex and give a lot of importance to that and aren't perhaps old enough to start feeling anything of a paternal nature, very strongly. There is only perhaps one really older Order Member present that I could ask about this, or just say anything about this from his personal experience. Does he feel a bit paternal towards the Mitras in his ambience? (Laughter)

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Abhaya: (Unclear)

S: Because after all they are grown up. If they are about twenty and you are about thirty five or forty you ought to be able to have a bit of a paternal interest in them in a natural way, quite apart from your spiritual interest. So in as much as you have the spiritual interest you ought to be able to utilise the natural paternal feelings just to strengthen your spiritual interest in them. Some people of course have a sort of natural paternal interest in others even though they themselves may be comparatively young.

Abhaya: You seem to be suggesting, Bhante, that this is the essential element of the good relationship between Order Members and Mitras, the paternal. If you haven't got~~~ou are saying, then you will be more strongly polarised to (the other sex ?) but is there something else?

S: It's as though people don't have, obviously, in most cases, a real Bodhisattva spirit, so it is as though you have got to take some natural attraction and turn it in that direction. Do you see what I mean? So you could use the paternal instinct in that sort of way and develop it, it is your sort of raw material, as it were. If you are a mature man, forties, fifties or whatever, and you are in contact with a young man who is obviously inexperienced and a bit lost well your natural feeling is to give him, if he allows you, a bit of guidance to take a bit of an interest and see that he doesn't get into trouble. Or advise him when necessary, again if he allows you; you take that sort of fatherly interest quite naturally. So if you can develop that along more spiritual lines you then will be able to function as an Order Member in relation to Mitras more successfully. More than doing it out of a sort of cold sense of duty because you are being urged by me or other Order Members.

Abhaya: I suppose interests in common is another starting point.

S: Yes. But as you must know, fathers enjoy doing~with their sons and teaching their sons carpentry and all that sort of thing; or at least they did. I refused to take any interest in carpentry, (Laughter) , or gardening, nonetheless I got on with my father very well. Anyway that is allabit by the way, though it is quite important. I have been quite concerned in recent months by the lack of attention in respect of Mitras, and have been quite shocked almost at the small amount of attention that Mitras get in comparison in some cases with the amount of attention that girl-friends get; but I don't want to labour that point too much. I mean, have girl-friends too if you can find time but don't leave the poor Mitra out in the cold.

Dhammarati: Could I make just one more brief point on that. From my experience in London it is not that there are actually strong peer friendships even with Order Members. I would even go so far as to say that quite often there is not a strong sexual relationship with somebody of the opposite sex. It seems to me that an awful lot of people in the Order don't have strong re~ationships almost at all.

S: Well I have heard recently, since we've come to the

question that some Order Members, even in East London have said, I haven't heard this from elsewhere, have said that they feel lonely. Which seems to me extraordinary, really extraordinary. But one explanation did occur to me, that sometimes when people do feel lonely, or whatever, sometimes instead of going and seeing someone, they sit still and expect someone to come and see them. It doesn't occur to them that they could solve the problem by going and seeing someone, they just sit there and wonder why does no-one come and see me, why don't people appreciate that I feel lonely, that I need contact. They don't think of giving contact, in some cases. So I think perhaps that is part of the problem. But again it is an extraordinary, even a shocking that even a single Order Member could feel like that, but it would seem that there is more than one Order Member feels like that. So again this is something you can thrash out in chapters. Maybe it isn't so easy to have a close and strong relationship with someone. In ordinary life, in the ordinary world, we assume that we have got close contacts and so on, but actually we don't have, very often. But after we get a bit into spiritual life and into the Order, I think perhaps we begin by realising that we don't have any real strong relationships and perhaps that realisation has to come first before we start actually developing them. Often we just take it for granted that we do have strong friendships when actually we don't because we don't really know what a strong friendship is. We have to discover gradually.

Tejananda: I think we had better get on Bhante, because ... (laughter)

S: I'll take you for a walk one afternoon. Yes, perhaps we had better.

Saddhaloka: There was a point in that question which hasn't really come out. To do with the change or the movement from servant to son which we saw in the parable, and that was very much what we were concerned with in the discussions.

S: Yes, that's true. I think this can happen in ordinary life. It happens that there can be a sort of progression in the relationship. In one of the Hindu scriptures it says, I mean I did cite the example of the brahminical disciple, it says, addressing the father, that one your son becomes sixteen cease to treat him as a son, treat him as a friend. There is a progression from son to friend, which is analogous to the progression from servant to son. Don't even stop at son. I have known cases in India where men have ended up, especially business men, without children, adopting a servant who has become more and more son like, and handing over the business to him in just the way that is described in the sutra. Anyway, if any interesting ideas in this connection did emerge from the discussion you referred to maybe someone could write up something for Shabda. Good points ( ? presumably weren't tape recorded in your discussions.

Tejananda: Now a question from Kulamitra on the Bardo Thodol

Kulamitra: Is the teaching of the Bardo Thodol, or Tibetan

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Book of the Dead to be taken literally or as a symbolic account of the psyche shrinking from reality regardless of the after death state?

S: I think both. Govinda makes the point that the Book of the Dead, so called, is not only a book of the dead but a book of life also, a book of the living. It is something that in principle can be practised in the present life. With regard to the after death experiences I think there are certain details which need not be taken literally. For instance the seven times seven days, I think that is clearly symbolical, but it does seem, if one studies the accounts in other traditions and even some more modern accounts of people coming back from death like experiences but without belonging to any particular spiritual tradition, something very much like the brief contact with Reality described in the Tibetan Book of the Dead, does take place. And even, it would seem, contact with what seem to be persons, angels, spiritual guides, Buddhas and so on. In a sort of personal form. So I think one can take the content of the after death experience as described in the Tibetan Book of the Dead as broadly corresponding to what seem to be the facts, though one does necessarily have to accept all the details, some of which may well be just symbolical or pertaining more to Tibetan culture than to the actual spiritual experience itself, more interpretive than anything else.

Tejananda: Following on from that a question from Padmavajra on the clear light of the void.

Padmavajra: You mentioned in passing the clear light of the Bardo Thodol. I noticed in my reading that the clear light, I think it is called the *prabas'vara* in Sanskrit, is often used alongside or even synonymous with *s'un ata* but I have never heard of you really say very much about it. Could you now.

S: I think I have sometimes mentioned in the past that one mustn't take the expression *śūnyata* literally, not that it is literally void, literally empty. The unconditioned is empty with regard to the conditioned but it is not empty in itself, so to speak. One of the ways of expressing that is by thinking of it in terms of light. Thinking of reality even thinking of the void as a luminous void. Though of course again that sort of way of thinking has got its limitations. You are really thinking of Reality as being something like the sun, to put it crudely, and that is a very good symbol, the sun is a very positive thing, one's experience of the sun is very positive but as a symbol it has its limitations because the light of the sun shines from a definite limited area. So when one speaks of the void as shining, one speaks of the clear light of the void, does one really mean that the void is circumscribed in space, or that reality is circumscribed in space and rays are coming out of it. Do you see what I mean? So one has to ask oneself what one really does mean by saying Reality, or one mind, or *śūnyata* is luminous. Because one obviously can't take that literally without circumscribing, without limiting the Reality itself. Sometimes therefore, it has been described in terms of

pure light, but without any actual source. I think I have

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described it in those terms somewhere. It is infinite light but not light which comes from any particular source. It is light of the highest possible intensity but distributed equally everywhere. Whereas the light that comes from the sun diminishes the farther removed it is from the sun, so presumably one isn't thinking of the light of s~unyata in that sort of way, one would hope not.

V:     Are there not sources within the Western Theological tradition which speak of reality in terms of light? And would they be worth investigating?

S:     Milton has something to say about God as light, doesn't he,

V:     'Hail holy light,

S: Well that's quite different isn't it. That is a very secondary light.

V:     I was thinking of something more theological, not in literature.

S: In Sufism reality of is often spoken of in terms of light and the approaches to reality in terms of stages of increasing brilliance. There are even Koranic verses, in fact I think there are some verses in the Koran which speak of light upon light. There is something like that in one of St. Paul's epistles. About going from glory to glory, and of course in the Pali Canon you get the idea of the higher heavenly realms as being realms of increasing brilliance. So presumably when you get to the top and reach the Transcendental, well that is the greatest brilliance of all.

Cittapala: Would I be right in thinking that Reality would still have that expansiveness? The sun has a sort of radiance which sort of expands outwards.

S:     Yes, but into what would Reality expand? (Laughter)

Cittapala: It's just the image of an evenness of light seems a bit sort of flat really, there isn't a dynamic quality to it.

S: I suppose it does. But why do we need to feel that dynamic quality? Perhaps we need both. One is Reality in terms of space the other is Reality in terms of time. Perhaps we need this light without any boundary with a highest degree of brilliance evenly distributed, but we also need within that, so to speak, the light which is increasing in brilliance all the time. Then that does sound logically contradictory, but that can't be helped perhaps. It corresponds to the relative and absolute Bodhicitta. Anyway perhaps we should pass on and not get into

metaphysical profundities.

Tejananda: Now Dhammarati has a question on fear of Reality.

Dhammarati: In the arable Bhante after teilin the son when he first re-encounters his father with all his wealth, was afraid, you point out that we don't want to

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change. And you say that that which is liberating seems to us confining. It's a bit hard to formulate a question from this, I must say, but it did sort of ring a bell with me and I wondered first of all if you could say more about that fear of change, and especially what we can do in practice to specifically overcome that fear.

S: I think you need the help of your spiritual friends, the encouragement of your spiritual friends. A few years ago I was staying at Tyddyn Rhydderch and it was in the spring and we used to go for walks and I noticed that there were lots of Pewitts around, and there were lots of baby Pewitts and the adult, the mature Pewitts were encouraging the baby Pewitts to fly. And they were scared of flying but in the end they flapped their miserable wings and they would get airborne and then there was a terrific flurry of wings and you could see that they were really surprised what was happening to them, they would be caught in some air current and be swept up and all around, the time, the parents would be hovering near and uttering what were obviously cries of encouragement. (Laughter) And after a few minutes the little Pewitt would get the hang of it and you could see he was enjoying soaring around, but he couldn't keep it up too long and he would come back to earth. But he'd made it, but he needed a lot of encouragement, and you could see the parents giving this encouragement really quite vigorously, sometimes for a long time before he really fluttered his wings in a determined fashion and got a bit air-bourne. So I think your spiritual friends have to function in this sort of way and say, come on, its alright, you can do it, jump, you are not going to kill yourself, you are not going to die. Give up that particular habit, or move out of that particular situation, its O.K., you'll survive, nothing is going to happen to you. I think that is one of the best bets. And this is where spiritual friends can be really helpful. I mean, usually spiritual friends with rather more experience than yourself who perhaps have gone through that very thing themselves before.

Dhammarati: Do you think its one of the functions of puja?

S: It's one of the functions of all spiritual practices. But then you have got to let the spiritual practice take its effect and not sort of shut off from it, not resist it, which you can do. So an inanimate thing, so to speak, can tolerate that but a spiritual friend is a living thing, is a person and won't necessarily tolerate that.

Tejananda: Now Ruciraketu has a question on lower and higher selves.

Ruciraketu: In the lecture Bhante, you speak of a 'Higher self' and a 'Lower self'. You gave this image of two chambers with a window through which you could see in one direction. You mentioned that the lower self could forget the higher self but the higher self wouldn't forget the lower self. I was just wondering in what sense the higher self wouldn't forget the lower self.

S: Although I have used those expressions, the higher

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self and lower self one mustn't really think of the higher self as really being separate. The higher self, in a way, is you, though it isn't very Buddhist language, but I think one is justified in using that language. It really means that you are aware of yourself at a deeper level. The higher self is aware of the lower self; there is a level within you, this is something we have talked about earlier on, where that deeper and more basic experience still persists. In this case perhaps an experience of something like reality, at least of a higher level of consciousness. So since it is higher it can, so to speak, look down on the lower. It is rather like one way glass, you can look through and see another person but that other person can't see you.

Kulamitra: Does that higher self then have a guiding function even though you are not aware of it in your life. (S: Yes) I have heard of people having experiences that they felt they had met spiritual guides which they also took to be an aspect of themselves, but as it were that separate aspect guided them.

S: Yes, I think one can think in those terms. There is the guardian angel, the genius-genius in the Roman sense, the patron deity, the patron saint. I think these are all ways of looking at that particular phenomenon, that particular experience. I think the important thing to realise is that it is you, and I think that is very, very difficult to realise, because the mere fact that you think of it as something there, something objective means that you don't really experience it as you. You can think that it is you, but that is a completely different thing. I think that the minute that you start to feel, really feel that that is you, then very strange things start happening within you. (Laughter)

Kulamitra: Could you say any more about that.

S: Well the strange thing is that the you becomes 'I', or that he becomes 'I' or the it becomes 'I'. Which means that the it is transformed at least to some extent.

V: Would you say this higher self is in the unconscious or something of that sort. Because the lower self isn't aware of it.

S: Well, that is a mode of speaking. It is in the unconscious in the sense that the lower self is not conscious of it. That is all that it really means to say that it is in the unconscious.

Kulamitra: If being the higher self, it as it were, has paternal feelings towards the lower self and therefore appears in the form of a guide, why does it only appear occasionally, or even very occasionally in a very concrete or definite form? Why does one not hear that voice more often?

S: Because one is oneself, the lower self is the lower self. And some lower selves are lower than others (laughter), they are farther removed from a higher self and hear its voice less clearly or less frequently. This is really just a question about your general spiritual status. I mean, why are you not Enlightened? Why are you not normally dwelling in the third dhyana? Well, there are ten thousand reasons. Why are you

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what you are, or why is the lower self what it is?

Tejananda: I find it rather confusing in respect of what you were saying the other night about the dangers of the language of potentiality and imminence. (S: Yes) In what respect can that higher self be said to be there if you are not actually experiencing it?

S: I would say that the language of thinking that you are Buddha is very dangerous and you probably should avoid it. But I think to think in terms of a guardian angel which you can't actually see but that it is just hovering quite near, it is certainly not Buddha it is not even a Bodhisattva, to think of a sort of guardian angel or equivalent is quite a positive thing.

Ktilamitra:    Why?

S: Because there is actually a very real possibility of contact with that, whereas the possibility of contact with the Buddha, for the time being, is really rather remote. So you cannot but just think of the Buddha and yourself as being Buddha in a purely abstract and theoretical way which doesn't do you any good at all. Whereas thinking that you have an angel who is your own slightly higher self is much more real, is more accessible, is something you can actually feel or have some feeling for.

Abhaya: Do you think, Bhante, that it is good to actually invoke your guardian angel?

S: I think it could be, whether that works for you you just Wave to find out. Some people



might feel a bit of a fool invoking their guardian angel, or whatever, maybe a punya devata or ( ? ) Abhaya: The ( ? ) what did you call it?

S: Punya devata. I have heard some Sinhalese Buddhist using this expression, which I thought rather interesting. My friend Sangharatana often used to speak of his punya devata. When things were going rather well he would say, "Ah, that must be my punya devata looking after me". A sort of personification, as it were, or embodiment of ones own previous good karmas helping one in the present. He seemed to think of it very much as a sort of guardian angel, which I thought interesting. Or as functioning rather as a guardian angel or a patron saint.

V:: I like the idea very much, but just fitting 7i somehow with visualisation practice. Do you think that in a sense, initially when you visualise your Yidam what you are really coming into contact with is a sort of emanation of the real thing, the Buddha or the Bodhisattva?

S: Yes, one could certainly look at it like that. An inferior emanation, you could say, yes, indeed.

Kulamitra: Is it then appropriate, when visualising, to, as it were, feel that that is your guardian angel?

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S: I would say if it is a Buddha or a Bodhisattva it is much more than that. I think probably if you do visualise successfully though it is formally - in both senses of the term - a Buddha or a Bodhisattva, your actual experience is more akin to that of an experience of your guardian angel. It is sometimes said that Buddha's and Bodhisattvas have three forms, they have a devata form, a Bodhisattva form and a Buddha form. So perhaps you could think of the devata form as corresponding to the guardian angel.

Kulamitra: I suppose what I was feeling behind that was not wanting to meet too much reality too directly, in a way inhibits your visualisation of the form, if you feel that that is what will happen. But I would rather like to meet a guardian angel, rather like to have one of those, so if you take it further into the form ...

S: I think for many people the danger is not shrinking from ultimate reality but continuing to think of ultimate reality in purely conceptual terms to such an extent that you are cut off from any slightly higher experience at all. It is much better to actually experience your guardian angel on a comparatively low level than to just have thoughts, very highly abstract thoughts about Buddhahood and ultimate reality. An ounce of practice, or an ounce of experience is worth a ton of theory, a ton of conceptualisation.

Suvajra: Do you have any suggestions as to how you could actually, well not invoke a

guardian angel but almost create them if you don't feel you have already got one? (Laughter)

S: Well, you have to make a point of contact, or find a point of contact. Look in literature, even look in art, see whether there is any sort of figure of that kind, broadly speaking, that attracts you and that you can take as your starting point. If it attracts you you must have some affinity for it, it must mean something to you. It might be a figure from ancient Egyptian mythology, it might even be a figure from an epic or a novel, or from a painting.

Tejananda: We've got three more. The next one is from Dharmavira about the stage in the talk of theism or dualism.

Dharmavira: In connection with explaining the details of the parable of the return journey. At the stage of religious dualism, that is where the son is becoming familiar with the mansion and the riches of his father, you say it is just a matter of time now. If you are talking about the transition from dualism to insight how can it be said to be just a matter of time?

S: Just a matter of time assuming that you are working on it. I didn't mean that it was an automatic process. If you keep up your spiritual practice then it is a matter of time before; well from a Buddhist point of view, if your spiritual practice is Christian you may just remain stuck in that duality and think that the riches that you are observing just don't belong to you, belong to somebody else. But within the Buddhist context, if you keep up your practice with your background of Buddhist thought, well your practice and you yourself will gather momentum and you will find yourself moving from the stage of

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dualism to, so to speak, the stage of oneness.

Tejananda: Dhammarati now has a question on dirt, or the heap of dirt.

S: Well that's a down to earth question. (Laughter)

Dhammarati: In the lecture, Bhante, you use the Buddha's analogy of the man with the arrow in his eye, and you say something to the effect that you don't have to look at the roots of your neuroses, you have to look at them here and now and go beyond them. But later, commenting on the image of the son shifting the pile of dirt you suggest that this could refer to the psycho-analytical process. But in the context the shifting of the dirt seemed to be a useful preparatory stage in breaking down the son's alienation from the father. Could you comment on how useful psychoanalysis and other psychoanalytical techniques are in the context of a spiritual practice, and what you think the limits of them, even the risks of them are.

S: I think they can be useful within the context of a spiritual practice, or at least spiritual life. But I think outside that context, at least sometimes, they don't seem to do so much good,

perhaps because they have become ends in themselves. If man is a basically spiritual being then no method or no technique that doesn't recognise him as being basically a spiritual being is going to be able to help him very much. He may be able to do some useful preliminary work but not really much more than that. And perhaps even the preliminary work in some cases will be vitiated - by the fact that there wasn't that recognition of man as basically a spiritual being. Because perhaps you can't really help man to any great extent unless you recognise that. But certainly within the spiritual context I don't rule out the fact that some techniques of, for instance, psycho-analysis or gestalt or psychosynthesis or all the other things that are around these days, may not be of some help.

Dhammarati: Could you say something of what you think the limits of them are, and what you think the risks of them are.

S: I think in a way I have already indicated the limits. About risks, I think one would have to go into each particular technique or method individually and I don't think it is possible to do that. I think the great risk simply is that you lose sight of the basically spiritual nature of man and the ultimate spiritual objective. I don't think it is really possible to think in terms of helping people to be really happy without taking a spiritual dimension into consideration. So if you are trying to help someone, whether by means of psycho-analysis or psychosynthesis or whatever, if you are trying to help someone and trying to help that person to be happy, if you think of happiness in purely mundane terms perhaps you can't really do all that much for that person. Can't really help them to become very happy. A lot of people, from what one gathers, people in the United States, seem to have their analyst, not as someone who is helping them to get over their problems, and then they will be in a better state of mind, but as an

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ongoing institution, rather like going to your doctor or your lawyer. Some people even say that you do have your analyst like your doctor or your lawyer because you always need him. It isn't really very encouraging from the Buddhist point of view. Perhaps he also needs you.

Dhammarati: Is that because sooner or later you hit contradictions or you hit difficulties in your life style, or just a sort of narrow ...

S: I don't think you can really deal with a person piece-meal. I don't think you can really say, "Well we will deal these mundane problems leaving aside any sort of spiritual consideration I don't think you can do that, I don't think you can ignore that man is a spiritual being when dealing with him in any sort of way, or dealing with any particular aspect of him, perhaps not even the physical. Can you really treat him as a machine? Or help him even to a limited extent treating him as a machine?"

Dhammarati: There was a second part to the question. In many Order Members and Mitras it

seems to me that there is some real, authentic meditation experience may be meditation experience built up over years of practice. But at the same time it is set about by quite deep rooted reactive patterns of behaviour which quite often seem at odds with the meditation experience. And year after year these basically ( ? ) patterns seem to go untouched and unchanged. Do you think that there are areas, in our communication with other people for instance, that meditation doesn't affect and that we don't successfully tackle in the Movement in other ways?

S: I think~~meditation would resolve if you could get deeply enough into~ but I think that is what very often doesn't happen, deeply enough into it for a sufficient length of time. Sometimes one's problems may need to be tackled on their own level, as it were, bearing in mind as I said that man is basically a spiritual being. Perhaps your spiritual friends are the best person to do that, by pointing out to you perhaps what you can't see yourself. And perhaps in extreme cases you may need even some professional help, but I think as far as possible that should be kept within the Movement, within the Order itself.

Dhammarati: Do you think our spiritual friends do enough of pointing out our basic patterns?

S: Probably not, because to be able to point out you have got to be able to know that person very well, and you have got to have a strong positive feeling for that person, that person has also got to trust you. This implies a considerable degree of friendship. Perhaps one doesn't do this, one doesn't function in this way as a friend because normally one isn't sufficiently a friend. I think people could do a lot more for one another in this way.

Cittapala: Bhante, the implication of what you are saying was that if you didn't have an intuition of a higher spiritual reality towards which to try and grow you couldn't

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really successfully engage in psychological techniques. Does that imply then ...

S: By successful meaning anything that did any really lasting good, yes.

Cittapala: Would that imply that people who were coming to learn meditation, or coming along to the Movement basically out of a psychological motive, that one shouldn't employ an sort of psychological technique until such time as they had got some sort of higher spiritual intuition, at least.

S: Not necessarily, because it might be sufficient that you understood that, even if they didn't. That might be sufficient, though one can't really generalise just talking about people purely in the abstract. One would have to consider individual cases. But also, I think this is an important point, sometimes so-called psychological problems are spiritual problems. For instance, sometimes someone may go to the doctor, apparently with some sort of illness and the doctor starts treating the illness, but perhaps basically what they are suffering from is just malnutrition. In the same way someone may come along with, say, psychological problems,

but what they are actually suffering from is spiritual starvation. So there is not really much point in just trying to tackle the psychological problems in the traditional way, traditional in terms of say psycho- analysis, without giving them spiritual nourishment. It is the spiritual nourishment that they really need, perhaps just the friendship that they really need, and then at least some of these problems will go away. I don't think that always happens, it isn't always the case. Sometimes one can best tackle people's psychological problems, as they seem to be, by giving them spiritual nourishment spiritual contact and spiritual friendship.

Saddhaloka: In the discussion around this area there does seem to be quite a lot of interest, we have been hearing a bit about EST, a bit about counselling, and I notice in myself two things. One a definite interest in all these things, a sort of attractiveness about them, but on the other hand there is a feeling that what is really lacking in a way is a sort of a more full hearted use of the more obviously spiritual practices that we already have, puja, confession, reciting of sutras.

S: Yes, spiritual friendships.

Saddhaloka: Spiritual friendship, yes. And that these more efficient and more effective techniques can almost be a little bit of an opting out. I notice both those feelings, the attraction and the feeling, yes it would be good to be more professional, more effective, but also a sort of slight suspicion that it is not an entirely healthy attraction in myself.

S: I think that suspicion is probably justified too. It is easy to wander off along bypaths. I think of all these methods and techniques, so far as Order Members are concerned, as being something that they know, that they are acquainted with and that they can bring into operation, they can use, if that seems to be required. It is one of the tricks up

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their sleeves, as it were. Not that one starts having wholesale recourse to these things, or starts giving meditation and puja a minor place in one' s activities or one' s dealings with other people. I think that is the danger or risk, that we start relying more on these methods and techniques than we rely on the Dharma and traditional Buddhist practices.

Tejananda: The final question is from Padmavajra and its about the gnostic parable.

Padmavajra: You compared the parable of the prodigal son with the parable of the return journey, which revealed differences between Christianity and Buddhism. If the hymn of the pearl was compared with the parable of the return journey would basic differences would it show between Buddhism and Gnosticism? I just noticed one difference, for example the son drugged and becoming a servant of the Egyptians. There are probably others but that

seemed quite different.

S: Though of course the drugged state can be compared to the state of unmindfulness. For instance in the Tibetan Wheel of life, thirst or craving is represented by a seated man accepting drink from a woman. So alcohol is intoxicating, so that is rather similar. I am not so sure that I could point out an sort of definite differences, not at the moment, perhaps there are differences reflecting different attitudes of the two traditions. It is interesting of course, that the King's son goes down into Egypt. Egypt in gnostic literature and also some Christian literature, early Christian literature has rather a bad reputation, it stands for the material world because it was there that the Israelites were in bondage to Pharaoh, as the King's son in a sense comes into bondage. Not so much a servant as a slave, one might say.

Padmavajra: Is there any significance in the fact that the young man was already on a quest, he was already looking for the jewel surrounded by the serpent, when he was drugged?

S: There are different interpretations given of that. Sometimes it is said that he represents... there is in gnosticism this strange figure of the saved saviour. The saviour who is himself in need of redemption; the saviour descends into the material world to save the souls who are lost there, that is the jewel he goes in search of. But in the course of the search he himself is overcome by those who are holding the souls in slavery, and becomes himself a slave, and is himself in need of redemption before he can save others. So this is the gnostic myth of the saved saviour. How he is saved is the subject of a lot of gnostic myth and legend. He is the messenger who doesn't come back so another messenger has to be sent to contact or recall the first one.

V: Didn't you once suggest that we should perhaps think of ourselves as a lost..., more like fallen Bodhisattvas, rather than ...

S: Well fallen angels rather than risen apes. Actually a combination of both, sometimes the ape is more in evidence and

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sometimes the angel, even the fallen angel.

We've covered quite a bit of ground again, haven't we. (end of tape 8)

Tejananda: We'll start with Ratnaprabha's question on the tape. He says: In discussing symbols of life and growth Bhante talks about development, and says that the lower evolution is a development of life and the higher evolution of consciousness. Is it not better to see both as developments of consciousness, primarily? Surely a mackerel has as much life as a monkey, but the monkey has a more sophisticated form of sense consciousness, closer to self consciousness.

S: I don't see that he is saying anything different from what I said. Read that again, it reads

rather oddly actually.

Tejananda: In discussing symbols of life and growth Bhante talks about development and says that the lower evolution is development of life (S: Yes), whereas the higher evolution is one of consciousness.

S: Yes, not that in the higher evolution there is no life but life is the base, as it were, upon which or from which consciousness as a more specialised development takes place. Do you see what I mean? In the case of living forms one can see a whole range of developments, but in the case of a human being, he doesn't develop physically once he has reached his maturity, development then is on the plane of consciousness. A Buddha has exactly the same physical body as an unenlightened person. From, let us say, from a common sense point of view, maybe in a subtle way it is transformed but it appears just like a human body. The difference is in the Buddha's mind, in his consciousness, not in his physical body. So it is in that sort of sense I say that the lower evolution is an evolution of form and higher evolution is an evolution of consciousness. But carry on with the question.

Tejananda: Is it not better to see both as developments of consciousness, primarily, surely a mackerel has as much life as a monkey.

S: Shouldn't it be a mackerel has as much consciousness as a monkey, one would have thought, following his argument?

Tejananda: He is saying that the monkey has a more sophisticated form of sense consciousness, closer to self consciousness. So he is saying the monkey has a greater degree of self consciousness, or of consciousness, than the mackerel.

S: Yes, I am not sure what he is getting at actually, but I don't mean to say that correlated with the development of the different forms of life, or the evolution of the different forms of life there isn't at the same time a certain corresponding development of consciousness. A monkey doesn't have quite the same consciousness as a mackerel, but the development between mackerel and monkey is nothing as compared to the development between unenlightened consciousness and Enlightened consciousness.

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Or rather, in the case of somebody who in the course of his life passes from unenlightened to Enlightened consciousness, there is not a corresponding physical development, development in terms of life corresponding to the difference to the difference of the development from mackerel to monkey. So what I am actually saying is that in the case of the higher evolution whatever development takes place is primarily a development of consciousness. In the lower evolution development is primarily in terms of form, even though, yes, there is a development of consciousness associated with that. But it is as nothing compared with the development

that takes place, without any corresponding difference in development of physical form when one passes from the unenlightened to the Enlightened state.

V: What were you thinking of when you said the Unlightened form might be subtly different from the ordinary human body?

S: Well there are some who maintain that on the attainment of Enlightenment, or even short of that, with the attainment of the higher dhyanas certain subtle, even chemical changes take place within the physical body. But it doesn't really affect the actual appearance of the physical body. For instance there are passages in the Pali Canon where someone is represented as meeting the Buddha, when the Buddha was wandering from place to place, and putting up for the night with him in a shed and not knowing that it was the Buddha, apparently just thinking he was just an ordinary wandering monk. It was only when they got into conversation that they find that the Buddha enunciating his distinctive ideas, which apparently were known to the other monks ideas of Gotama the Buddha, that the other monk thought that this must be the Buddha himself. But he certainly didn't see any bodhic protruberance or anything of that sort.

Tejananda: The second question is from Dhammarati and it is on the paradox of sameness and difference.

Dhammarati: In the lecture, Bhante, you talk about people growing and you say as they grow they get more and more different from each other but paradoxically they get more and more like each other. I can understand how people get more and more like each other, I can understand how as you are moving towards similar deep spiritual experience, of the dhyanas and of metta and so on, how that element of similar experience comes in. And I can see from the people round about me that people get more and more different from each other. But I don't understand so clearly, actually, why people get more and more different from each other and how people get more and more different from each other, and it puzzles me.

S: Perhaps I should just give an illustration. Supposing you have a number of lamps, perhaps made of some semi translucent material and with patterns and designs on them. And inside of each lamp there is a bulb, or something of that sort, some sort of light. As you turn up the light, as the light inside that lamp becomes brighter not only does the lamp give off more light but you see the pattern in the semi-

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translucent lamp itself more and more clearly. So when the light of Enlightenment shines through you it lights up your features, it lights up your distinctive individuality all the more clearly. That's the only way in which I can explain it.

Dhammarati: The image is in a way clear, but to go to the plant symbolism, where you are suggesting the plant symbolism, that the person (with the path out to?) that actually the plant changes as the process of growth goes on. But the image of the lamp suggests an increased



experience but the container as it were staying statically the same.

S: No not really, because one musn't sort of press an illustration Uoo literally, because if one wanted to make it fully adequate one can actually say it is not simply that the glass of the lamp is actually lit up but actually that it does change. Do you see what I mean? Because no analogy, no comparison is complete in all its details, or corresponds in all its details. So you musn't argue from an inconsistency between what is illustrative and that which is illustrating it to an actual inconsistency in the thing illustrated itself, or the situation illustrated itself.

Don't you notice this with people? Maybe they haven't gained Enlightenment but they have progressed over the years and you do see something as it were shining from them or through them more brightly than before. Don't they seem again, in that paradoxical way, much more themselves? (V's Yes) Not as though their individuality has simply merged into something non-individual or even supra-individual, so that they become rather featureless, they seem actually much more themselves than ever before. There is that strange combination, that strange fusion of individuality and universality. They are more universal but at the same time more individual. So ( ? ) you suggest that the universal is not an abstract universal, it is what Hegel called a concrete universal. Whether it quite corresponds I am not sure, but we can take that expression in a sense that does have meaning within this particular context.

Dhammarati: It struck me in the study group that the thing that differentiates individuals in a way is the conditioning, all the different things that limit you, that make you distinct. And I wondered if the fact that you do become more individual didn't .. , almost it seems to me there's a contradiction and there is this universal experience coming through, but almost that there are biases in the individual that limit it. And that ....

S: But it is the individual that also expresses it, again paradoxically. If there wasn't that limited form there, well, what medium could there be for the expression of that universal experience. I was also going to say though that one could even say that people who are less developed are more like - each other on the level of form, so to speak, than those who are more developed.

Kulamitra: Dhammarati suggested that personality is mainly conditioning, but isn't it also more positively built up than that by your own actions in the past. Isn't it in a sense.., I am not sure, but isn't it made up of punya?

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S: Well in the case of the Buddha's Sambhogakaya, that is, as it appears so to speak, to the Bodhisattvas, that is the product of his punya-sambhara informed by his jnana-sambhara - which is the Dharmakaya. So yes, there is not simply your mundane, conditioned personality, but there is one might say that more skilful, as it were merit produced personality, if one can use that form, which provides, admittedly an inadequate vehicle for the expression of

whatever higher consciousness or even Enlightenment experience that you have attained, but without which that higher experience could not express itself at all on the mundane plane.

Kulamitra: Practically speaking, would that be the kind of interests and activities that you put energy into over a period of time, that built up this distinctive personality?

S: Well from a Buddhistic point of view it could be over Wundreds of lifetimes. But certainly you can build up that, as it were, personality, to some extent even in the case of a single lifetime. Maybe the paradox~ or the confusion of the unique individual (of reality?) or the unique individual and the equally unique universal needs just to be reflected upon. I am not even sure that it is a paradox, actually. A paradox has been defined as, as I think I have said before, truth standing on its head to attract attention. A paradox is something which is logically self contradictory. I don't think that the idea of the fusion or the coalescence of the individual and the universal is a paradox in that sort of way. perhaps the term universal itself can be misleading, we think of something abstract and common. Perhaps that isn't the best way to think of it. (Pause) Anyway when the individual, let us ~ay to use that language, attains the universal, it is not as though the individual is merged into something which is non-individual. You could say that from a spiritual point of view universality is a particular way in which the individual behaves, or the particular type of mode of operation of the individual. For instance when the individual is developing metta towards all living beings, well, the individual is adopting a universal attitude, the individual is metta, one might say, universal; but it is an individual being universal, and perhaps only an individual can be universal. A tree can't be universal, a stone can't be universal, not even a monkey or a mackerel can be universal, but a human being can be universal because a human being is an individual and universality is an attitude that pertains essentially and distinctively to the individual. So we tend to think of the universal as like a great hole in the ground into which the individual falls, or a great ocean into which the individual loses himself. But it isn't that.., that is really taking language too literally, taking what is essentially a metaphorical expression, literally. Thinking of universal as somehow extended in space, but actually universality is a quality of the functioning of the individual. And not even that, perhaps even that is too static. One could say that universality is the way in which an individual functions, or one of the ways in which an individual functions, not a thing into which the individual disappears. So any apparant contradictoriness as between the notion of individual and the notion of universality, or

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the universal, I think arises when we make the universal something more abstract and then reify it - then it does appear to be contradictory to the individual. But there is no such thing as the ur~ersal, one might say, from a spiritual point of view.

Ruciraketu: Are universals not just abstractions we use to ....

S: In the logical sense, yes. In the logical sense they are. There is the great debate in philosophy from the time of Plato down as to whether universals have an independent existence. Whether their existence is real or notional.

Kulamitra: What you are calling the universal attitude, then, is quite different from that, isn't it. (S: Yes) It is not to do with metaphysics. You seem to be describing something which is an attitude, which applies actually in practice to particulars.

S: Yes. To an indefinite range of particulars, yes.

V: Wouldn't all universals work in that way? When I think of universals I think of something like a colour red, which we experience in different ways and then we describe that experience by calling it this universal ....

S: Yes, there is the quality of redness, but actually we never encounter redness we only encounter red objects. Yes.

Ruciraketu: So, in the same way, are we talking about a similar kind of universal in that it can't exist apart from individuals manifesting those qualities?

S: No it's not quite like that, though something like that. Because I have spoken of universality in connection with a universal attitude in the context of the spiritual life as being essentially an activity. A concept like that, a redness is not an activity, it is a thing. So really I am saying that we should get away from the idea or the associations of thingness in respect of the spiritual life, or when we speak of the individual and the universal in the context of spiritual life. The individual becomes universal, it is not that the individual considered as an entity merges in another greater entity, it is more that that individual starts behaving or functioning in a particular kind of way. I think that is a less misleading language to use.

Kulamitra: You mentioned that in the context of metta, is that basically how one can see it? In other words, if you feel metta in practice you feel it to the people you meet, although in principle you are open to anybody.

S: Yes, you are not experiencing an abstract, universal, cold metta, you are behaving in a certain kind of way towards people that you meet, or whom you think of, or whom you imagine. So when you adopt a universal attitude in a more general way you don't merge yourself with a concept called universality you just behave in the same kind of way to everybody that you meet. Perhaps you can say it is more practical and more down to earth and less metaphysical mode of expression, a less

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abstract mode of expression.

Kulamitra: Presumably not just everyone but everything, or every being?

S: Well can you behave in the same way towards everything, Th ( ? ), can you treat a stone kindly?

Kulamitra: Every being rather than every person.

S: In traditional Buddhist literature they usually speak in Uggerrms of sentient beings. It would be rather difficult to imagine oneself hating a stone. You might feel momentary irritation with it for getting in your way but you couldn't develop an enmity for a stone. (Laughter) Although in these degenerate days maybe somebody could, I wouldn't like to say!

Dhammarati: Would an aesthetic, appreciative awareness of inanimate objects be kind of parallel, on this level of metta..., there is actually in attitudes, even ( ? ).

S: One could say that, one could say that. It is a sort of even minded attitude. I am not so sure though that all things literally are equally beautiful or could say..., perhaps yes in certain moments of vision. I mean, could you honestly look at an ash heap in the same way you look at a flower. Could one see as equally beautiful, what does one mean by seeing it as beautiful, are there not degrees or levels of beauty?

Dhammarati: In the Taoist literature, every branch grows perfectly, some long, some short. Maybe an ash heap used to be branches. (laughter)

S: Isn't an ash heap perfect in its own way? The branch is a product of a certain combination of forces, is not the ash heap in the same way the product of a certain combination of forces. So I doubt whether you can see everything as equally beautiful, I doubt that. Unless you use the expression beautiful in a completely metaphorical way. Perhaps you could see the ash heap and the true, the branch of the tree as equally sunyata, I think you could do that, but I doubt whether you could see them as equally beautiful.

Tejananda: The next two questions are on the topic of chakras. Firstly one from Mahamati.

Mahamati: In the lecture, Bhante, you mentioned that in Tibetan Buddhism lotuses of different sizes and colours are used as symbols of the psychic centres.

S: Yes, in Hinduism too.

Mahamati: Could you please say whether or not, in the course of one's spiritual development, one would expect eventually

at those places in the body corresponding to the traditional location of the psychic centres?

S: I think very broadly speaking one could expect. Take for instance the heart centre, if you do suddenly feel

emotionally unblocked, and you feel your very positive, powerful feelings expanding you will get a sort of sensation of release here. Some people might actually have even a visual experience of something like a lotus bursting open, or even like a ball of light expanding, because there can be many variations according to temperament on the same basic spiritual or physical-psycho-spiritual experience. Some accounts of the chakras are so literalistic it is as if you have to go through a graded path, a graded course, and you have to see your chakras with exactly the number of petals as described in certain texts, actually opening quite literally. I think this is not so. That sort of imagery suggests a certain type of experience which can in fact take other forms. The essential feature of the experience is that release of energy on a higher level, that bursting open, that flowering. There is a flowering, as it were, of your being, of your energies at successively higher levels and you can experience that, even see that in different ways. In a way that is obvious because different texts..., the Buddhists have this sort of symbolism, so do the Hindus, so do the Jains, the symbolism varies, not all the texts describe the lotuses in exactly the same way or describe exactly the same number of petals but each text is remarkably specific. So in a sense they can't all be right. You might suggest that in a sense they are all right but not in their own literalistic way.

V: Are there different traditions as to the actual positions of the chakras or is it possible to locate them?

S: That seems to be reasonably constant. That the lower energies are associated with the lower centres, there seems to be that sort of correlation of lower and higher, it really does seem that the emotions are felt here and still more subtle energies are experienced here to do with speech and communication. And the most subtle of all here, or rather still more subtle here and most subtle of all up here somewhere. And very low, gross emotions round about the navel. It does really feel like that, it seems like that. If you get really angry, where do you feel it, you feel it here. If you feel strong devotional feelings well you do feel as though your heart sort of expands. Sometimes you can literally feel within yourself a sort of tickling sensation at those particular spot. There is quite a wide range of experiences possible.

Tejamitra: Bhante, on that, is it wrong to concentrate on your organic heart which is actually off the middle, it is not on the median line is it? That's the way I approach that.

S: I think most of the texts, certainly the Buddhist ones are careful to distinguish between the organic heart and the heart chakra which is certainly in the centre of the body. There may well be a relation between that and the organ, I am not sure, I am not very familiar with the actual details.

Tejamitra: So it would be better if you were approaching the metta from this angle, as it were, it would be better to concentrate on the middle.

S: Yes, the middle . The Tibetan tradition usually regards the chakras as to be visualised on the surface of the body. Sometimes, in the case of the heart centre, for instance when you visualise the OM AH HUNG, these you visualise on the surface of the body. Sometimes the AH is visualised here, isn't it, because you have sometimes got seven, sometimes five, sometimes three - but anyway leave aside the OM AH HUNG. When you visualise a mantra, here at the heart centre chakra you visualise it as on the surface of the body, but when in addition to that you visualise the mantra of say Manjugosha you visualise it as inside the body on the level with the mantra on the surface of the body. So you have got two heart centres in a sense, a surface one and as it were a deeper one.

V: Invariably if you visualise OM AH HUNG, Thorehead, throat and heart of a Bodhisattva should it always be on the surface?

S: That is what is said, yes.

Suvajra: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso from Manjushri Institute has published a book called Clear Light of Bliss in which he goes into the chakras quite extensively. Have you read that work and how do you ...

S: I did see it, I've got it, I can't say I've read it, Vdid look through it some years ago.

Suvajra: Did you get any impressions?

S: I can't say that I did. He no doubt follows a particular Thradition and there are a number of traditions. Govinda describes one or more in Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism. I think Evans Wentz also describes it. You may well find discrepancies between the different systems. When you come to the Hindu systems as described in Mudrake~ books there are still more differences. Some teachers even say that one is not really to think too much in terms of the physical body, it is a sort of model of development, as it were, which is framed after the model of the physical body but not really to be identified with it where other teachers seem to take it really quite literally, especially perhaps the Hindu teachers.

V: Which way would you advise us to take it?

S: I'd suggest that one took it as a sort of model but didn't overlook the possibility that that model did correlate to some extent, or in certain ways with the physical body and its energies as well.

V: So you would think of it being more of a model connected with a body than say, perhaps, imagining your experience like a mandala. Imagine your experience in developing a mandala wouldn't necessarily with your body particularly.

S: In a way, sort of. I was just thinking about something that Mr. Chen used to say. Mr Chen was very much of the

view that the lotuses, or the wheels as he used to call them, ? ) had nothing to do with the physical body. According to him these were present in the subtle body, not in the gross body at all. But then again the gross body does have its different ( ? systems and perhaps there is some correspondence between those and the corresponding features of the subtle body. Also, of course, there is a still further development, there is not only the subtle body but what the Vajrayana calls the wisdom body. So in a way you have got three bodies, you have got the gross physical body, the subtle body and the wisdom body, not taking body too literally. And according to Mr Chen the Yogic practices concerned with the chakras and the subtle nerves and so on pertain to the middle one, that is the subtle body and were a means of, as it were, building up that subtle body or activating. Just as certain other practices were means of activating or bringing to life the wisdom body. So even if one thought of the different chakras and the different nerves as located in the physical body, that it was not that they were actually to be located within it or to be identified with physical organs or physical energies, but it was a means of concentration, to help you fix your concentration. So I think that is the case.

V: Dare I ask where would the astral body which you were speaking about~(year ) come into that? Would it also have its ( ?

S: The astral body, it's a question of terminology, but what is usually called the astral body would seem to be a sort of sub~le material counterpart of the physical body, but intermediate between the physical body and the subtle body as I have just now described it. That you would seem, as it were, from what I gather, to be born with that whereas this other subtle body is more something you build up as a result of your spiritual effort.

Kulamitra: You are speaking of the subtle body, intermediate and so on. Is this just the same phenomena viewed from more and more subtle levels of consciousness?

S: What does one mean by the same phenomenon? It is more like different levels of development. At present one might say that the subtle body which has these five or these seven centres with lotuses or wheels, doesn't exist, you have to bring it into existence. It is not a body in the sense that it is something already existing.

Kulamitra: So it is not just as if someone in a higher state of consciousness would perceive you including that subtle body, you would consciously have to develop it first.

S: Yes. It may mean that someone in a higher state of consciousness might see you had a potentiality to develop it but would not see you at that moment of time as actually possessing it, just as they might see you as fundamentally void, or ~nlightened 2'n ~e derL~ ct your being but would also see that you had not in the present actually realized that.

Dhammadhara: Where does this thing called the aura come in?

S: Well, there is an aura for every level of one's being, there is a physical aura. Because your physical body is giving off a sort of dust all the time isn't it; minute particles of skin and so on are constantly coming away, you are actually surrounded by a cloud of fine dust which you are giving off. Then there are the various electrical currents that you are giving off, which your physical body is giving off. So that is your sort of aura, or the aura of the physical body. Then there is the aura in the higher sense, which means the corresponding influence of those higher more subtle bodies, which under certain conditions may actually become visible in radiant form. So the main point here is presumably that one isn't to think of a body of any level as something absolutely discrete, as though - there is the edge of your physical body and beyond that there is non-body. If you were to see yourself through a sufficiently powerful microscope you couldn't really see where your body ended, it would just fade into a sort of cloud of minute particles. But in looking not through a microscope you just see a sort of sharp edge, but that sharp edge isn't there. There is a finer and finer sort of aura, extending out into space, and similarly on other levels.

V: Would the Manom~y~akaya correspond to the astral body or the subtle body.

S: Manomayakaya; yes this is the body made of mind or of consciousness. It would seem to correspond to the subtle body not the astral body, though the Pali texts don't go into this very much. There is a passage where the Buddha describes the Manomayakaya as being like the physical body in every respect except that it is unimpeded by space and it is luminous, and he says it emerges from the physical body just like (the pip emerging from the bead?). So one can't be sure but that does sound more like the subtle body than the astral body, or perhaps he doesn't distinguish between the two. Again, one mustn't take the term body literally. That you have an astral body means that you have the capacity to function on the astral plane, so to speak, just as you are said to have a dream body, well what does that mean? You have the capacity to dream. In order to experience a certain level, let us say, you need to have the organs appropriate to that level. Those organs make up the body of that level.

V: So it would relate a bit to the teaching of the TIve eyes?

S: Yes, because if you have an eye it presupposes a body, doesn't it, one would assume. If you could speak of five eyes you could speak of five bodies.

(end of side 1) But the divine eye is more like the astral and the subtle bodies combined, and then of course the other bodies are purely spiritual - in the sense of transcendental. So, yes, the divine eye would seem to cover both the astral body and the subtle body. The other higher eyes are eyes of increasing degree~s of spiritual penetration, the Dharma eye, the Buddha eye and the - what's the other one?



Kulamitra: The Wisdom eye. (S: Yes) In the Vajrayana there is a system of five kayas, is that related in any way?

S: Related to what?

Kulamitra: To the bodies that we have been talking about.

S: Well kaya does mean body, though again it is not body in the ordinary sense. If one thinks in terms of levels well one is thinking of an objective factor and a subjective factor, the subjective factor is indicated by the ~erinbody. For instance there is the expression, 'to touch something with the body', which means to experience it - as we would say -that is the Pali idiom, to touch with the body. We would say experience. So that the body suggests a possibility of experience, so to say that someone has five bodies means he is able to experience things at five successively higher levels of existence. But you musn' t try to imagine them as equiped with five bodies as Avalokitesvara is equiped with eleven heads, not that.

Suvajra: Can I come back to the chakras again. You might have answe!this before, but I wanted to try and chase it a bit further to see if I have got it right. The OM AH HUM which we visualize in some of our visualization practices; the concentration on the AM AH HUM, is this to help you to build up the subtle body that you were speaking about?

S: Yes, one could say that. Because the OM AH HUM represents body speech and mind, when you are doing visualization practice, of the Enlightened being which you are trying to become. The OM is the essence of his mind, the AH is the essence of his speech and the HUM is the essence of his body - body and mind can be reversed, paradoxically, but which every way you have it the OM AH HUM represents the essence of the body speech and mind, therefore the whole being of the Bodhisattva. So the fact that you visualize them on yourself is suggestive of your attempt to transform yourself into that particular Buddha or Bodhisattva by, initially, visualizing him or her and reciting the mantra. At the same time, of course, inasmuch as the potentiality for that transformation is within you, your own body speech and mind, or if you like your own O~ AH HUM, are seeds from which the body speech and mind, or the OM AH HUM of the Bodhisattva or Buddha can grow and develop. So by imagining the OM AH HUM you are, as it were, reminding yourself of the fact that you have the potentiality to grow into a Buddha or Bodhisattva and have the body speech and mind of a Bodhisattva. So when you place the AH in your throat it means that you are trying to develop your speech principle, your unenlightened speech principle into the Enlightened speech principle of a Buddha or Bodhisattva.

V: By means of the ray that comes down?

S: Yes, well this is, as it were, a particular kind of symbolism to help you experience that. It's as though your unenlightened body, speech and mind, as symbolised by those mantras are seeds. Sometimes mantras of one syllable are called seeds, bijas, which the light as it were, warmth of the rays, coming from the Bodhisattvas cause to germinate.

Abhaya: Could you say then, Bhante, by building up the

subtle body, through spiritual practice, if it's strong enough this is what, presumably, you take through the death experience.

S: Yes, one could certainly say that.

Abhaya: Could it be possible that you bring into, say, this life maybe the shattered remains of a subtle body with some bits that you can actually build with - is that a good way of looking at it?

S: Well, some traditions do say that at the time of death the astral body disintegrates like the physical body, but after a much longer time. Whereas the subtle body, even though perhaps battered, as you mentioned, goes on - I won't say existing, not existing in the sense of perduring - but it maintains its continuity of existence. It's in a way the higher individuality, one could put it in that way. That is the vijnana, also, which in a sense passes - though not unchanging - from existence to existence, from one life to another. But it is usually greatly obscured by the conditioning created due to your experience through the physical body in the physical world. So I think one can say that very few people really have much experience of themselves even on that level. Because we have a physical body and the physical body bulks very large in our experience, and our thoughts are mostly thoughts connected with, or based on, or developed from, sense experiences, there is very little else. So if we were to subtract everything that we experience, everything that we think of that is derived from or mediated by the five sggensgges not very much would be left. So this is one of the reasons why death can be quite a traumatic experience, because you are not only torn away from the physical world but you are torn away from the personality that you have built up as a result of your contact with the physical world, and you are left with as it were yourself. Not yourself in any very highly developed sense, but just yourself as it exists (so to speak) independently of your experience of the external world. In dreams, even, our dreams are usually leftovers from our experience of the external world, but sometimes we do get glimpses of something else which isn't connected with our experience through our bodies of the external world, a sort of almost higher experience.

Abhaya: Do you think this is one of the big obstacles to spiritual development for a lot of people? I mean, not just maybe psychological difficulties but this very strong connection with the ...

S: Yes, a preoccupation with. Because, think of it, every Way you have to eat two or three times, so you might have been meditating but you are pulled down to the trough almost, by the needs of the physical body. So for an appreciable period of time you are mentally preoccupied with the idea of food. In the same way think in the case of a young man who is preoccupied by thoughts of sex, without being moralistic, looking at it just from a psychological point of view, thoughts of sex play a very big part in his consciousness, in his life. But those thoughts pertain to something belonging to the objective, material world. So if one is what one thinks,

and to a great extent one is, well then how great a part of one is made up of thoughts about the material world. So it is not surprising that you identify yourself with your self as constituted by your experience of and thoughts about your experience of the physical world through your physical body. Do you see what I mean? You are saying all the time, "I will have my lunch at one o'clock today, I will go and see somebody, I will go and have a bath,' or 'I'll go and do some shopping, I'll go and cut down that tree'. These are all activities and thoughts pertaining to the material world, and you are made up of those thoughts, so you come to think of yourself in a very limited way and get quite out of touch with that linking consciousness, as it is called in Pali, which so to speak passes from birth to birth. Just to go into this just a little bit more. Your physical body has a certain sex, a gender, rather. So you think of yourself as male or female and if you are a man you find it very difficult to think of yourself as a woman and vice versa, but that stream of consciousness, that linking or relinking consciousness is neither male nor female. But just because you have a physical body which is male or female you think of yourself in that way. I am over simplyfying it, it isn't really quite as simple and straightforward as that, but broadly speaking that is the position.

Kulamitra: I understand what you are saying, I think what I am not clear about is what you would consider to be thoughts outside that. Is it just visualization practice, for instance? What would it be that goes beyond that?

S: Well one does have some experience of that when one Weditatates and you start ascending into the dhyanas. But first of course you are aware of the external world, so your thoughts to some extent are bound up with the external world, or at least as an awareness of the external world, or at least an awareness of the body. You are aware of a sensation, as it were, of comfortableness, you are aware of the cushion on which you are sitting, you are aware of temperature - whether it is warm or whether it is cold - and so on. But after a while that sort of consciousness becomes quite peripheral, you may for moments not really have much of an awareness of the physical body, your awareness is centred within. You have an experience of yourself, so to speak, as you exist irrespective of your experience of the physical world through your physical senses. You don't usually get very far away from your experience through the physical senses but if you get at all deeply into meditation, that is what happens. You have much more of an experience of yourself as you exist, so to speak, apart from the physical body and apart from your experiences through that body, of the external world.

Kulamitra: What about reading dharma texts, particularly maybe more imaginative ones, or even other works of imagination, do they count in that way, away from the physical body and the world?

S: In a way yes, but in a way no. Because, even if you do visualization exercises, to use that term, supposing you visualize a Buddha or a Bodhisattva, to begin with you visualize hb~ as

having a material form, you are still really

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on that level, though it has become more subtle. A Bodhisattva doesn't have a form in that sort of sense but you can't help thinking of him in that sort of way or visualizing him in that sort of way to begin with. It's not that a Bodhisattva doesn't have any form but his form is only analogous to form in a material sense, it's not just a more subtle version of it. So visualizing a Bodhisattva in the way that we do can be a point of departure but you are still really, through that visualized Bodhisattva form, in touch with the material world, in a subtle sort of way. Similarly if you try and visualize the Pure Land, well how is the Pure Land described - in terms of trees and flowers and gems, all of which are material things. But this is how we have to proceed, going from the comparatively gross to the comparatively subtle and still more subtle.

Suvajra: Didn't you speak about fidelity, at one time, as being something which would help that level.

S: That's true, that is true, yes. Because it means that your fidelity is not to the body, for want of a better term, the fidelity is to the mind. I am not saying that in a rationalising sort of way, that you can be unfaithful physically and faithful mentally, no, I am not on that tack at all. But it means you can have a very vivid apprehension of somebody's presence even if you are not physically in contact with them. Because if out of sight is out of mind, have you really been with that person on a level other than the physical; do you see what I mean? So if you have been with somebody, not just physically, but mentally let's say (using this word mentally very provisionally for the time being) you have been with them mentally, well you can still be with them mentally when you are no longer with them physically. And it is that which is the basis of fidelity. So fidelity, say when one is separated by space or by time, is impossible unless "A~as established a relationship, or contact, with the other person which transcends the material level and the physical body. To begin with it is through the physical body that you experience the mind, you don't perceive it independently, not unless you are quite highly advanced, but eventually you can almost experience the mind apart from the physical body. You can have a very vivid sensation of someone's actual presence when they are not physically present. You are not imagining that they are physically present, it's a different thing than that, it's more like a direct perception of their mental being, even though they are not present physically. So to begin with you can't, as it were, have access to the mental being, so to speak, independently of the physical body. But after a while, perhaps you can. Sometimes people have a very vivid experience of getting to know someone just by reading about them. A very vivid sense, perhaps even of their presence, though you have never met them in the flesh, but they become very real to you. On perhaps a slightly different level, not perhaps a highly spiritual level, at the moment I am writing my book about Ambedkar and Buddhism. I did meet Ambedkar three times, I didn't have much contact with him, but writing the book I have a very strong sense of actual contact with him which is not

just imagination, using the word imagination in the popular sense. It is as though one was actually in contact. I think you can feel that with various figures of the past, if

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you immerse yourself in the story of their life or in their writings. But in the case of ordinary people, ordinary friends, you have to get to know them in the ordinary way, on the ordinary physical level, have actual physical contact with them, talk with them, look at them. But if through that you get into contact with them as they are on a deeper level, one might say, their real individuality, to use that hackneyed expression, then even in the absence of the physical body you are still in touch with them, therefore you remember them, and therefore you behave in a way as though they were present. Though in - the case lets say of romantic relationships you are not swept off your feet by the first pretty face that comes along, because you are still in contact with your original friend. You don't feel out of contact and therefore perhaps don't feel the need of developing another relationship, unless of course your sexual need is quite strong, which is sometimes the case, even with those who in a sense on the mental level remain faithful. But you see what I am getting at? It's not easy to know people on this other level. And usually we are attracted to people by what they are physically, usually. I think we probably don't realise the extent to which we are influenced by someones physical appearance, and also by what we read into that appearance. I've posed sometimes, a little conundrum which goes like this, You are walking along the street and you see an attractive woman walking along in front of you and you start indulging in little sexual fantasies, and start feeling sexually quite stimulated. And perhaps just on the point of trying to address a few words to the young lady, and the young lady turns round and you suddenly realise it is not a young lady after all it is a young man. And all your sexual feelings are at once switched off. But actually the physical appearance of the person hasn't changed at all. So what has happened? This can be reflected upon. (Laughter) So what is it switches on, what is it that switches off, etc. etc. So I'll leave that one with you. But aside from that, we are initially attracted just by what we see. Someone may have, for want of a better expression a really beautiful soul, this expression originates, I believe, in German literature. Someone has a beautiful soul, you know what I mean by that. But this beautiful soul may be housed in a very unattractive body, but nobody gets to know the beautiful soul because initially they are so influenced by physical appearance. So someone with an externally unattractive physical appearance is less likely to make friends, I think, unless some very warm personal qualities do come through and counteract the effect of their appearance. I couldn't help smiling recently, reading one of Devamitra's reports. In his report he was bewailing the fact that so many men Mitras. didn't have adequate Order contact and Order members weren't taking sufficient trouble to see them. He reported on all the Mitras individually from this point of view and then one particular Mitra he reported on and said, "he's young and quite attractive looking so I expect he'll get quite a lot of attention". And I think it's quite true, because if someone is good looking or at least pleasant looking and bright, then people are attracted. They don't see, and perhaps to begin with they can't see, more deeply than the physical appearance. But at least they ought to be alert to the fact that it may well be that a

very interesting person, even a quite beautiful person, or beautiful soul is lurking

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beneath that unattractive exterior only waiting to be known. And I think we have all had experiences of people who look, perhaps, very attractive and very beautiful but have quite unpleasant characters when you get to know them. In the case of someone of the opposite sex you may fall in love because she is so beautiful only to discover that she has got a really dreadful nature. Then you have really had it. (laughter) I need not enlarge upon that. But it is just to emphasise, just to underline, just how much we live, the extent to which we live on the material plane and how our thoughts are mostly bound up with that, and how difficult it is to rise to a higher level. I think one of the times when we are most able to do that, to rise to that higher level, is when we are on solitary retreat, especially if it is way out in the country. Even though yes we are surrounded by nature and nature is material, but at least its a very simplified material world, with no human beings and no houses and no factories, no buses and trains and radios and record players and all the rest of it. That's why I have been a bit surprised, I mentioned this once before, to hear of people going on solitary retreats and then watching T.V. Someone wrote and told me about this in all innocence, apparently it not occurring to him that it might not be appropriate to watch T.V. He gave me his daily programme and in the evening for a couple of hours he watched T.V. (Laughter) And somebody else on retreat told me how she used to go and have a cup of tea nearly every afternoon with Mrs so and so down in the village and have a chat, when she was on solitary retreat. (laughter) She seemed to think there was no., well it was just O.K. It didn't even occur to her that it was a bit inconsistent to having a solitary retreat, she described the retreat as a solitary retreat, and there she was trotting down to the village every day for a cup of tea and a chat with Mrs so and so. I am not saying that you shouldn't necessarily do that, I am not saying that there might not be occasions when that very modified solitary retreat isn't appropriate, it may be. I think you shouldn't describe it as a solitary retreat, that can be misleading. I think we should reserve the term solitary retreat for those retreats where we are alone, don't take anybody with us and we are away from all neighbours, or even if we can see them we don't actually have any contact with them or talk with them. And during the period of the solitary retreat we are either studying or meditating, or just doing our chores or taking exercise in a mindful way, and not anything else. That is what I understand by a solitary retreat. So I think we should reserve the term just for that kind of retreat. So yes, there are all these pulls, coming from the material world. The physical body demanding food, you can't even leave it for a few hours without it getting hungry and you are pulled back to the material world and have to stuff food into your system. And then there is the pull of sex, there is the pull of all sorts of other things. You are constantly being pulled back, or pulled down to the material world. And that's not to mention all the more emotional pulls, though very often these are bound up with things or experiences on a material level. So that means you don't really get much into touch with ourselves as we are on a deeper level, though still mundane level, even though deeper or with others on that deeper though still mundane levels. Do you see what I mean?

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Tejananda: Prakasha has another question on chakras.

Prakasha: Could I just ask something else, actually. Going back to the levels of physical and subtle body, what level does prana and chi actually relate to?

S: Well again, I must say I am following Mr Chen here again, there is the physical breath and then there is prana in the sense of the subtle breath that, as it were, courses through the subtle body. And then there is even said to be a wisdom breath. But clearly prana is not ( ? ) literally, I think even on the physical level, with respect to the physical body, prana is not just breath, it is more like energy and the breath is one of the expressions of that energy.

Prakasha: Is that sort of intermediate between..., well a level of the physical body, but bdo~ th~ subtle body which is a more mental body?

S: Yes, one could say that. Again probably one musn1-t imagine Wiscrete degrees but gradual more or less continuous progression.

Prakasha: I was just wondering if, through doing those sort of exercises, yoga or Tai Chi, one could actually work on or affect the subtle body?

S: I think one probably can. I think one can affect the more Thubtle t~rough the more gross and vice versa. The interrelation between these different bodies, actually between what we call body and what we call mind, is quite mysterious. It doesn't seem that anybody has really understood it, perhaps it can't be understood because when you talk about the relationship between mind and body, well in order to talk about it at all you have to objectify mind. In other words you have to think of mind as a sort of body so it becomes a relationship between two bodies, you haven't related body to mind at all.

V: Just a short question on that. Was this one of the questions which the Buddha refused to discuss when asked about it?

S: (I suppose?) that the body was identical with the mind, or rather the jiva was identical with the body. Something more like soul was identical with the body or not, or both or neither. It's not so much he refused to discuss it, it was not discussable.

Prakasha: My other question was a more sort of practical question about the visualization of seed syllables during visualization practice. Usually I don't put a lot of emphasis on the visualization of seed syllables during my practice. I certainly don't feel vortices of energy. I usually spend more time on the rest of the practice. I wondered whether you felt it was a good idea to actually spend time, perhaps a bit of time, on visualizing the seed s llables?

S: I think it certainly is, yes. Some people, some yogis WWeditate only on seed syllables, not on figures at all, one can do that. One can have a very vivid, a very powerful experience

just of the visualized seed syllable. Even within

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the context of visualization of the figures of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas it is quite a good thing, if one can, if one has time and so on, to give at least some attention to visualizing those seed syllables. It could also be a sort of warming up practice for visualizing the figures, because seed syllables, letters from the Sanskrit alphabet are much more easy to visualize~figures which by their very nature are quite complex. So it's a good sort of run up to the full practice. One can even start, say, by visualizing letters of the Roman alphabet and when one is doing quite well with those, then go on, perhaps, to the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, or the seed syllables in the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet.

Kulamitra: If one were to do that would you absorb those seed syllable~that you'd visualized back into your body, or would you just visualize them and stop visualizing them?

S: It depends. There is no hard and fast rule, but you could certainly just visualize the seed syllable, visualize it very large, about a foot in height and anything from four or five or six to eight feet distance from you. Spend some time visualizing that, perceive it very vividly, and then at the end of the practice absorb it; one could certainly do that. And of course it is quite useful, as in the case of the visualized figures, to put the seed syllable up on the wall in the size that you want to visualize it. Have it there all the time, have it there with you in the room. It then sort of sinks in and you will find it easier in the long run to visualize it, if you are very familiar with it in that way.

Padmavajra: You talked about the size of the seed syllable and the distance from you. In visualization generally do you think that one should go for a particular size of visualization? Do you think that it ought to be very large and overwhelming, or very small?

S: Well it's according. If you tend very much to distraction IT is said that the image, whatever it is, should be comparatively small. If you tend to dullness and sleepiness well it should be larger. Because if it is very large and you are naturally distracted your mind wanders all over it and around it.

V: Very small you might miss it! (Laughter)

S: You just have to find our from experience what is just right.

Padmavajra: Do you recommend visualizing in Sanskrit or Tibetan, rather than Roman, if one has the ability to do so?

S: I would say Sanskrit, that is getting a bit closer to the source. Though of course the Nagari character is a little bit modern. But I don't think there is any need to go back to



Brahmi characters, or Lon~ari characters. If one feels attracted for any reason by Tibetan characters, well by all means visualize them, some people find them more elegant or more pleasing. Or they like the idea of Tibetan culture, so fair enough, visualize Tibetan letters. I did once devise, I have got them somewhere in my notes, or rather I experimented a bit writing or drawing mantras in

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Roman characters, but in an artistic way. Not exactly an artistic way, but - it is difficult to describe what I did - but intertwining them, and things of that sort, as you find in medieval manuscripts and using just the letters of the mantras. Especially, for instance, I did it with the Tam, the seed syllable for Tara; a T and lower down an a, and an m, all sort of interlaced. I think one could experiment in that sort of way.

Cittapala: If you are learning how to visualize, starting off a practice, would you suggest concentrating first on the seed syllables, as it were, because they are at the beginning of the practice and they are easier, but then after you have got a good feeling for that move onto the practice afterwards.

S: You could even go back to an earlier stage than that, you can just visualize a disc or a cube as in the visualization of the six elements. That's one of the functions of that practice, to give you some experience of very simple forms of visualization. So it is though you have got, first of all, purely abstract geometrical forms. Then perhaps you have got letters, of an alphabet. Then perhaps you have got living material forms, you have got for instance a flower, or something of that sort, or a jewel. And then you go onto the most complex images of all which are those of human, that is to say, Bodhisattva and Buddha figures. So if you have difficulty with visualizing perhaps it is advisable to start off with these very simple forms.

Cittapala: So for instance, if you are new Order Member and you have just been given a particular visualization practice, would it suffice to do the mantra recitation and whatever other verses associated with that practice, but actually"~ as you suggest, a geometrical form, of the right coloured' light?

S: I am not sure what you are saying

Cittapala: For instance if you have been given the Manjugosha practice but you can't visualize Manjugosha, would it be better to visualize a disc of golden orange light, and just do the mantra recitation and the stutti?

S: That wouldn't be equivalent to doing the Manjugosha practice, but you could just visualise the dhiih. That would, in away be equivalent, because that is regarded as the essence of Manjugosha. So if you had difficulty visualizing the figure you could certainly, instead of visualizing the figure, initially, just visualize that seed syllable andd~ib~~Manjugosha; and hrihi for Amitabha, and so on. Even visualize the light rays coming from that, and so

on. And when you become sufficiently adept in visualizing that, well then go on to visualizing the form, One could certainly approach the practice in that way.

(end of tape 9)

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Tejananda: We've just got one more question. It's from Saddhaloka, it's on the secular context of the Higher Evolution.

Saddhaloka: Bhante, in the lecture you questioned whether it might not be best to present the whole issue of the Higher Evolution in secular rather than religious terms. You comment that it could be that in sticking to traditional religious forms we could be very limited in our effectiveness. Assuming that you don't mean just presenting the Buddhist vision in language that avoids the use of the word Buddhism and traditional Buddhist concepts, as for example in the way that Christopher Titmus tries to. We were wondering exactly what does it mean to present the issue of the higher evolution in secular rather than religious terms? And what, for example, would be the place of devotional practices in such an approach? And would you in fact still speak in these terms or has your thinking been qualified by experience since the lecture?

S: I don't like the word secular, at all, really. It's almost as bad as the word religion. I read a certain amount of secular literature but you get the impression of rather disgruntled, rather elderly men, in shabby raincoats and very, very offensively rationalistic. That's the sort of impression that you get. So I don't like this word secular. What I was thinking was this, or the background of my thinking was this: I think with the collapse, or collapse to some extent of Christianity in the West, the collapse that is to say so far as a quite a lot of very creative people were concerned, that meant that their creative energies passed outside the sphere of traditional religion, i.e. Christianity, and found independent expression in the field of the arts. So you had the secular spirituality almost. Secular only in the sense that it wasn't traditionally religious and also didn't have the support of an existing tradition. So it's as though much of the really vital spiritual life of the last two hundred years has expressed itself in artistic and not necessarily religious terms. So I was wondering whether we, I think at that stage, wondering whether we couldn't make some kind of link-up there. For instance, to give an example, with the Romantic poets. I wasn't thinking, I believe, so much in terms of secular thought, science and all that sort of thing, I think I was thinking more in terms of trying to establish some kind of connection with expressions which were basically spiritual but which weren't connected with the traditional Christian religion. Do you see what I mean? For instance, Keats talks of the 'vale of soul making' and things of that sort. I was wondering, I think more, whether we couldn't talk in those sort of terms. It least to some people. I didn't mean, I think, that we should jettison traditional Buddhist language altogether,

but that we should have one or two alternative languages at our disposal, at least in talking to certain people. I didn't mean that we should switch to a hard, dry, semi-scientific kind of language<sup>1</sup> eschewing everything which is emotional, imaginative or inspirational. I certainly didn't mean that. For instance you could regard

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Keats as a secular poet, because he seems to have been very little influenced by Christianity, in fact he seems to have been somewhat antagonistic to it. So you could say, yes, Keats was a secular poet, he wasn't a religious poet in the way that Dante was or that Milton was. Possibly Shakespeare was a secular poet, since he was a dramatic poet we can't be quite sure. Who else was a secular poet? Shelley was a secular poet, Wordsworth was in the earlier part of his career, you could say. So one could express Buddhist truths in a secular language in the sense of expressin~ them in the sort of language that say Keats used in his letters, or that Wordsworth used, or that Shelley used. I think that was what I was getting at, I can't be completely certain because I gave the lecture fifteen years ago. But I am sure I wasn't thinking in terms of a bleakly, quasi-scientific language.

Dhammarati: Since the lecture, Bhante, obviously you have made a lot of references to literary figures and Order Members, within the Order, have made connections with literary figures and ( ? ) figures. Do you feel that we are developing this secular language sufficiently, or do you feel that we're ( ? ) in the language that we use?

S: I don't really see that we've developed it at all. You get the odd lecture which refers to: Buddhism says this and Keats says that, sort of thing. But I don't think we have really started in this respect. Maybe it is something that you can't hurry, but I don't think it has really taken off yet.

V: What about the experiments with the Arts Centre at Croydon, would that not be covering this area.

S: No, I don't think it does really, though perhaps it is a step in that direction. Because at the Croydon Arts Centre we have speakers from outside. Admittedly they are invited on the basis of some, even though it is quite slight, affinity with our general outlook. But they speak their own language which is sometimes a language that we could use, say the language of literary criticism, the language of the arts in one way or the other. But the Croydon arts centre, in a way, is, as yet one could say, consumer oriented. One has all these very good lecturers and speakers, they come and give their lectures, but there isn't any corresponding creativity on the part of the Buddhist audience. But maybe that will develop, - it may be that as people listen to people like Keith Sagar about whom Padmaraja was writing to me today, they will start thinking those are quite interesting expression~ they really do express what we are trying to get at within the field of Buddhism and the spiritual life - alright, let's start using those expressions, because those expressions are familiar to people, they will mean something to

them and we can infuse them with a still greater meaning and things may develop in that sort of way. But so far we haven't started creating that alternative language, as one could call it, even at the Croydon Arts Centre.

Dhammarati: If we were creating this language, Bhante, what would it look like? Would it be more than just adopting

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terms from previous thinkers, more than just giving lectures on poets.

S: Obviously it wouldn't be just a matter of language, because Thnguage is very closely connected with attitudes. I think, if these expressions were more native to the English language it would mean that we could communicate more meaningfully and more effectively with relatively new people. Or I think perhaps we don't realize the extent to which very new people are, if not put off, are puzzled by lectures or discussions peppered with Pali and Sanskrit terms and FWBO jargon. In some ways that is inevitable at this particular stage, but perhaps we should be trying to develop, with the help, say, of some of the great thinkers and writers of the past, in the West, a more indigenous language which will enable us to express our essentially Buddhist vision in a more imaginative and more effective way.

Kulamitra: I appreciate what you are saying, Ehante, but I can't help thinking that a really thorough appreciation, even of Keats or Shelley, is almost as rare as an interest in Buddhism in this country.

S: You are probably right, (laughing) it is probably rarer!

Kulamitra: And I can't really see how adopting the language of what is really still a very small highly cultured elite; I am talking about serious interest, so that you would actually be familiar with those terms which are used in literary criticism, would reach a wider audience. (It might convert that particular one?)

S: Yes. Well we would probably reach an audience that we are not, perhaps, reaching so effectively at present. But then I agree, yes, the mass of people don't have much sympathy for any higher culture. You have got to broadcast Buddhism not only on the third programme but on radio one and radio two (Laughter) and I don't know whether you can do it - I am not even sure whether you can communicate some of the subtler concepts of Buddhism in that particular medium. I am not sure that you can. This is not to say that Buddhism is only for the middle classes. Perhaps you have got to adopt a different approach altogether, a non-verbal one, because a lot of people, ordinary people, without much higher culture, would be attracted, perhaps, by community life, by co-ops and would find their way in in that way

and eventually come to appreciate other things.

Kulamitra: In which case, as it were, if they had to learn a new language, they might as well learn the Buddhist language as an artistic, cultural one.

S: I don't think you can just import traditional Buddhist language. I don't think you can do that anyway, I think you have to develop a completely indigenous yet faithfully Buddhist language, in the long run. As the Chinese have done, as the Tibetans have done, as the Japanese have done. But meanwhile we have to use our peculiar mixture of jargons, our bits of Pali and Sanskrit and Tibetan and our bits of FWB0 jargon and adaptations from alternative jargon.

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Dhammarati: Could I just ask a thing, quite concretely what would this kind of expression would look like, what would it sound like?

S: Well first of all it would be English and secondly it would be Buddhist. (Laughter) Maybe because I am engaged on some writing at the moment, perhaps I am overly conscious of this question of language and expression. But I think I will shall have to stretch the resources of the English language really to communicate Buddhism. And it will be good for Buddhism and probably good for the English language too, which is a very flexible language and probably quite capable of being stretched in that particular way. Sometimes when I am writing for for more popular audiences, as I am trying to do at present with this book on Ambedkar and Buddhism, I try to avoid, or I am avoiding using Pali and Sanskrit words; but I have to paraphrase just a little, I can't~fully communicate the Buddhist meaning, but in a way it isn't necessary in that particular context. If I just praphrase or get near enough, well that will do. For instance, I avoid the word 'good' and I use the word skilful or unskilful. I didn't want to use the word bad or evil so I used the word unskilful, and I just put in brackets, ethically disastrous. (Laughter) So I felt that was enough, if I was writing about Buddhism and writing for people definitely interested, I would go into that at much greater length. But I thought that would do, unskilful could be.., if you just leave it at that, 'unskilful' as the equivalent of akusala, unskilful would not communicate to an English audience what akusala communicates to a Pali knowing audience. So I have a further translation, which is a sort of paraphrase, in brackets - ethically disastrous. I thought that was quite good actually. (Laughter) So we might eventually be talking not about unskilful actions but ethically disastrous actions. Oh dear, here's something from Abhaya now! (Laughter)

Abhaya: This is a subject close to my heart at the moment because I am striving to write articles for Golden Drum, and the editor has imposed, well I shouldn't put it that way, (Laughter) 'Twelve hundred words, no more!' (you might get fifteen hundred if you are lucky) but, 'Twelve hundred words on what the Sangha, on what the Order ideally is.' To do something like that you have got to words, if you don't use the Sanskrit words, you use words like for example 'indi- vidual', now I use a word like individual I have got to explain what..., one has to sort of define every word. So I am wondering whether that actually is good policy.

It is very good practice in writing. Don't you think it is over stretching our resources, (laughter) a bit too early.

S: What were the Pali and Sanskrit words you were thinking of using, apart from Sangha?

Abhaya: Well stream entrant, for instance, you might use.

S: I think one can paraphrase there, I don't think one need use the term stream entrant. You can could paraphrase by saying something along these sort of lines, someone who in the course of his spiritual development has reached a point where positive factors so outweigh negative ones that he is

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in no danger of regressing.

Abhaya: Well that's a bout fifty words. (Laughter)

S: Well better that the reader understands a little but definitely understands it and has it clear. Whereas if you just use the words stream entrant and pass on, the new person is probably not going to understand anything. Stream entrant, unexplained, to the new person, is going to mean no more than s%otopanna, you might just as well say s~rotopanna and then he can at least look it up in the Buddhist dictionary.

Abhaya: My point, Bhante, is, you get say six words like that in a short article and you are spending the whole time defining your terms.

S: Ahh, but I don't think you should do it by way of defining Therms. The reader shouldn't notice, that is where your skill as a writer comes in. It shouldn't be a string of definitions of terms, but you make it clear as you go along in a quite natural way.

Abhaya: It is very difficult.

S: Oh yes, I fully agree with you, yes. Perhaps it means one shouldn't try to say too much in terms of actual content in the course of a single article.

Abhaya: Yes, probably that's it.

Dhammarati. Would you see co-ops and communities, Bhante, as a secular expression?

S: Well they are not so much secular as.., I don't like to use the word worldly, but they are institutions - using the word in a quite positive sense. I wouldn't say they are secular. I would say everything that exists, or has form in the external or material world could be

secular. Secular really is connected with time, isn't it. It's pertaining to the age, I think.

Dhammarati: In a sense they draw on, I suppose, social and political precedents, rather than draw on language that's traditionally Buddhist<sup>1</sup> or forms that are traditionally Buddhist

S: I think in some ways we shouldn't really contrast religious and secular, because the spirit of religion is often expressed in what is called the secular. Keats, whom I said could be described as a secular poet, sometimes expresses the spirit of what we could call religion. I have said something to this effect in *The Religion of Art*, where there is art which is formally religious but not religious in spirit, in the same way art which is not formally religious but which is religious in spirit. It's rather like that. It's not that the secular has nothing to do with religion, it has nothing to do with the form of conventional religion, but its spirit may be deeply religious in a non-traditional sort of way. What I am really saying, I suppose, to go back to the

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original question, is that my secular language is really the language of the poet and the artist refined still further for the purposes of Buddhism, do you see what I mean? As a possible alternative language to traditional Buddhist language, even if that language is translated into English.

Virananda: When you speak of refining the language of the poet or writer, do you mean something..., you were saying something about allegorizing language.

S: No I am not referring to that. You can quote a poet, but that is not really using his language, much less still is it refining it. By refining I mean not quoting a poet but taking his expressions or his kind of expressions and using them for Buddhist purposes, to express Buddhist ideas and Buddhist truths. But obviously you would be altering that language, subtly, in the process, and that altering would be a refinement in as much as Buddhism expresses a vision which goes beyond even that particular poet. Just as the poet himself may use words of ordinary language, but he modifies them, he refines them, because he uses them to express his particular vision. The poets don't coin new words, they use the same words that everybody is using but they use them in a very new way, a novel way, a fresh or an original way, or combine them in a fresh and original way. They communicate something new, or something individual. So we have to, as it were, carry the process, I think, a stage further. That means of course on the one hand a great sensitivity to the English language itself, as used by its greatest practitioners and on the other hand of course some depth of Buddhist experience, or some depth of spiritual experience as Buddhists. It's not just trying to translate from Pali into English without spiritual experience on the one hand, or a real sensitivity of the English language on the other. Though of course this is what scholars often do, just this.

Again we have covered a fairly wide field. (End of tape 10) Tejananda: Tonight we have got eighteen questions on the Five Element Symbolism of the Stupa. Starting with Dhammarati on the historicity of the eight stupas.

Dhammarati: It's almost as simple as that, Bhante. You mentioned eight stupas that were built over the Buddha's remains, and one over the jar. Is that an historical piece of information or is it mythical?

S: It isn't obviously mythical in as much as it doesn't involve anything that might not have happened. If the record has said ten million stupas I would think that was legendary or mythical but eight stupas is a rather modest number. And the account does come in the Pali Canon itself. I think scholars generally accept that as historically quite likely.

Dhammarati: Are many of them placed, are any of them placed? Do they know where any of them were?

S: To the best of my recollection that is doubtful. I'm not sure, I think though that some scholars might identify the Pripara relics with one of them, with one of those sets. Yes, I think we can reasonably take those stupas as having

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actually been erected. We know, in any case, by the time of Asoka the stupa was very well developed indeed and had reached a quite elaborate form, which presupposes a considerable period of development. And Asoka was only separated from the Buddha by one hundred and fifty years.

Tejananda: The second question is from Buddhapalita on the intervention of the brahmin in the Mahaparanibbhana sutta.

Buddhapalita: I just wanted to ask what the significance of the brahmin was and why didn't one of the Arahants intervene, for instance, to stop the quarrel between the disciples?

S: It does suggest, perhaps, that at that stage the brahmin had closer connections with the laity than the bhikkhu does. It seems a little strange, but, that may have been the case. Another possibility that occurs to me is that if the sutra does in fact reflect very ancient traditions it could be that the terms brahmin and bhikkhu were still being used interchangeably. As in the Dhammapada where there is a Brahmana-vagga immediately after the Bhikkhuvagga and both the brahmin and the bhikkhu are described in very, very similar terms, almost identical terms. So it could be that it was in fact a brahmin, a brahmin in the spiritual sense, not a brahmin in the caste sense. One would have to look at the passage a bit more closely



first, but I think that is a possibility. In other words some spiritual person. It is quite possible at that time that there wasn't that hard and fast distinction between the bhikkhu and the non-bhikkhu that arose at a later time. And clearly Adona I think it was, clearly had respect for the Buddha and his teaching. He could have been a sort of parivrajaka who hadn't joined the Sangha in the formal sense, if in fact there was a formally constituted Sangha of the more elaborate cenobitical type at that time. Though I am admittedly, here, speculating a little, so one shouldn't quote me as though what I have said in this connection is gospel. It is only a hypothesis, a possibility.

Tejananda: The third question is from Dhar~madhara about the derivation of the word pagoda.

Dharinadhara: Bhante, in the lecture you give the origin of dagoba as being from dhatu garbha - container- of relics. I think it was Lama Govinda who equated dagoba and pagoda and in a book of the peace pagoda they give the derivation of pagoda as being from bhagavat via Sri Lanka, meaning ~s in hol relics. Could you comment.

S: That comes highly unlikely to me. I have never heard of stupas being called bhagavat anywhere in the Buddhist world. I am very doubtful about that. Though again one can never be sure. I am inclined to think that Lama Govinda's explanation is more correct. One could imagine bhagavat being used as a general term of veneration but I have never actually encountered it being used in that way. I think the Japanese would have to produce definite evidence. I am not prepared to say that they are definitely wrong, and that there may not be some truth in what they say, but I think definite evidence would need to be produced that in Sri Lanka dagobas

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were at least sometimes called bhagavat and pagoda represents a sonification of that. One could even look up the English dictionary, it probably has pagoda, it might give the etymology, it very often does for these foreign, Eastern words, incorporated into English.

Tejananda: Now a question from Saddhaloka on stupas as a lay cult.

Saddhaloka: Bhante, in the lecture you suggest in the early centuries that stupa worship was entirely a lay practice, that the monks only came around to later.

S: Perhaps one shouldn't speak so much of stupa worship as such, but more of relic worship. Relics being, originally, enshrined in stupas. Later stupas were built which didn't enshrine relics, which were of another type, they either simply commemorated the Buddha or commemorated a certain event in the Buddha's life which had occurred on the spot where the stupa was built, or contained some article associated with the Buddha, but not an actual relic. Later, as I have said, stupas as such seemed to become objects of worship, especially when they started incorporating images of the Buddha, or rather the Buddhas, very often, and the

Bodhisattvas. Anyway what was the further question.

Saddhaloka: Well there was a question arose out of our discussion of that point. I found it difficult to believe from a scholastic point of view that the bhikkhus wouldn't actually feel drawn to express their teacher, almost quite naturally, by leaving flowers and so on at the stupa where his remains were buried. I'm just asking for your comments on that.

S: Well one mustn't forget that in the Mahaparanibbana sutta the Buddha is represented as telling Ananda not to bother about the disposal of the remains of the Tathagata, that there were devout lay people who would look after that. So this suggests that the bhikkhus were supposed to be getting on with their meditation, let us say, and not concerning themselves with the Buddha's relics or the cult of relics. But it does seem that quite early on that bhikkhus did become involved in the cult of the relics and some schools, like the Jetavadins which were apparently schools of bhikkhus representing a sub-division within the bhikkhu sangha, especially concerned themselves with the cult of the stupa or the Jeta and emphasised its importance. So even if to begin with the worship of the stupas, or of the stupas containing relics at least, was more or less the prerogative of the lay people it very quickly spread to the bhikkhus and presumably the bhikkhunis.

Dhammarati: Do we have any teachings or any doctrines left from the Jetavadins?

S: There was some works which contain references to their beliefs. For instance there is the (Kapavatu?) of the Abhidharma pitika, though perhaps I should hasten to add not the (Kapavattu?) itself but the commentary, because the text itself doesn't identify the schools to which the

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beliefs or doctrines that are being refuted belong, that is done in the commentary. But from that source, assuming the commentary to be reliable, we do have some idea about the immediate teachings of the Jetavadins. And we know, so far as I recollect, that they did attach special importance to the worship of stupas. Also there is reference to the worship of stupas throughout the Mahavastu, which is work of the Lokottaravadins. And of course it is illustrated in art. There are some very striking sculptures representing the worship of the stupa by, so far as I recollect, lay people at Amaravati in south India. It wasn't just a question of worshipping, it was a question of decorating, people were very fond of hanging the stupas with garlands of flowers, and scarves, and flags, and streamers, and little bells - just as described in the White Lotus Sutra.

Tejananda: Now a question from Abhaya on stupas as architecture.

Abhaya: I just wondered Bhante whether you see the stupa being a prominent architectural feature of the New Society in the future?

S: I think stupas would look rather better than sky scrapers or blocks of flats. I think I would be quite in favour of the stupa as a feature of the landscape of the new society. Not necessarily in a completely traditional form, but perhaps with some link with..., well if it was based on the traditional structure, the traditional four or five element structure, well it would approximate to traditional forms. Though as we saw in the lecture, these can be very varied. At Bhaja there are some very, primitive stupas, consisting of a hemisphere on a drum, one might say, a drum of approximately the same diameter.

Abhaya: Do you think that..., not temples but shrines could be built on the ground plans of stupas. Not just have them as reliquaries, would it be O.K. to have buildings?

S: These are known in the Buddhist world, I believe in China and in Tibet too, temples are sometimes built in the form of stupas. The famous temple at, now where is it, in Tibet, is it (Kum bung?), yes, the hundred thousand Buddhas. That is a temple built in the form of a stupa. Or even a monastery, because at every level there are little rooms, one can see that quite clearly from the photographs. And pagodas, which are also essentially stupas, at least parts of stupas, do have chambers on every floor, on every storey, and these often contain images. So in this way the pagoda is not just a reliquary it is also a shrine in the sense of a temple. So one could combine the two. Though personally I rather like the idea of a stupa being solid. A monument, not to be used, as having no use. In some way that's, I think, quite a positive aspect of it. It's just there and you worship it, you can't use it, not even as a temple. Sometimes I believe pagoda's were used as libraries, or for sacred books, at least some of the floors would have contained books.

Tejananda: Kulamitra has a slightly more practical question

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Kulamitra: This is on the same lines but (practically orientated?). In the lecture you say that the stupa is at least as important a symbol as the Buddha rupa. Actually I have felt for some time an urge to build one. So, 1) Can this be done just for the sake of the symbolism or does one need to think of it as a reliquary? 2) Do you have a preference for a particular type of stupa being built within the movement? For instance, I feel a coloured element stupa would have an immediate symbolic impact but a seven element, sort of yin/yang stupa, as it was describe in your lecture, lent itself more to aesthetic architecture. What do you thin~?

S: Well I am quite happy that if we had stupas within the Movement we would have stupas of many different shapes and types and varieties. I see no reason for sticking just to one. I think I prefer them to approximate to the architectural model, architectural model in the sense of the more original, more solid model, not to the temple like or palace like model which you do get, perhaps, to some extent in China and Japan. I think if we are going to start building

stupas perhaps we ought to start with simpler forms rather than more elaborate ones. There are several types which I like. I quite like the Sinhalese bell shaped ones. I quite like the Tibetan chorten type, with the *bumbar* in the middle, the *~galasha*. I also quite like the very elongated Thai stupas, I think they look very, very graceful. I also quite like the simple solid ones, just a square base and a hemisphere on top of it. So we could build all sorts of stupas, but whatever we built, whatever the significance or symbolism, they should be aesthetically pleasing. The proportions should be harmonious. I am not sure how I feel about the multicoloured stupa, I mean it shouldn't look too gaudy. In Sri Lanka stupas are usually just white washed and that looks very beautiful; of course there is a solid green background very often. In Burma they like to gild them, which is also very nice. In Tibet they white wash them and the *thinial* is often gilded.

Kulamitra: I suppose one of the things I was thinking is that you talked about it in the lecture as a symbol and then you went into the five element symbolism. And actually I feel quite an immediate impact from that, and I wonder if in building a stupa, as it were, is one just trying to build something for Buddhists, or something which will actually be attractive and meaningful though people may not understand why, outside of the knowledge of Buddhism? ( ? be more effective.

S: One can't ignore the people outside Buddhism. One isn't going, obviously, to pander to their particular tastes, but one can't ignore them. I can't help thinking that some people outside Buddhism would consider a four coloured stupa a bit gaudy in fact not in very good taste. You see what I mean; we'd just have to see. I must say, personally, I rather like the white stupa. But no doubt we will have quite a variety of them in due course. The bigger the better, I would like to see a really big one.

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Kulamitra: What do you count as really big?

S: Well at least about twenty feet in diameter. That's not very big by traditional standards, but it's big enough. I think also the setting is quite important. I think the Japanese stupas, the stupas that have been erected by the Japanese peace people, they have chosen their sites very carefully, and they have worked very well, as far as I have seen. The one in Battersea park works very well from that point of view, similarly the one near Milton Keynes. They selected the site quite skilfully, created a nice garden around. One needs to make it blend with the surrounding countryside, or whatever. In Nepal they are very fond of having stupas in the courtyards of temples and monasteries, rather small ones. One can do that too. One could, for instance, have a little stupa in the centre of the courtyard at the LBC and one could march round it, chanting, on the occasion of festivals. It would be about so much (indicates) in diameter. About four or five feet. If you would be prepared to sacrifice all that valuable bicycle parking space. (laughter) Or baby walking space.

Tejananda: Suvajra has a question about relic keeping.

Suvajra: This is a two part question. You say in your lecture that (reliquary keeping?) is a human failing, but a for ivable one. I am not uite sure what ou had in mind here, we had quite a long discussion in our group about this. But we sure. surely from a Buddhist point of view, if a relic were to help you to connect with, say, the Buddha, and so the Buddha's teaching and help you develop more individuality, then could it not from that point of view be. ...

S: I am not sure whether I was referring to relics in the specifically Buddhist sense or not. I am not sure, possibly I was referring to relics in a broader sense, you like to keep mementoes and souvenirs and things of that, and can become quite attached to them. When you ought, perhaps, instead just to throw them away and think of the future rather than the past. I think sometimes Buddhists, in the past, historically, and even now, have treated Buddha relics and other relics as sort of fetishes. Do you know what I mean? Not kept them out of strong feelings of devotion, so much, as sort talismans, sources of magical protection and things of that sort. As was the case in the West. If you go round museums, especially cathedral museums in Italy, you find hundreds of discarded relics which don't seem to mean anything to anybody any more, but they meant a lot to people in the middle ages. Some princes and some churches had vast collections, even tens of thousands of items. But apparently various commissions, ecclesiastical commissions, or pontifical commissions have gone through these relics and weeded out at least ninety-five percent of them as not genuine even according to the church. Very few have been left. There are still an embarassing number of heads of St. John the Baptist (Laughter) and drops of milk of the Virgin Mary and so on and so forth. So it can degenerate into that sort of thing. And what is a relic, an arm or a leg? (Laughter) In ( ?

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you see all sorts of weird bones and skulls and things. I mean, do they really help one to connect? When we were in Sienna last year we went to the Dominican priory and there we found the head of St. Catherine of Sienna, the body being in Rome, they had to be satisfied with the head, the Pope wanted the body - he probably wanted the head too but she did come from Sienna so the Siennese were allowed to cut off her head and take it back in triumph. So there it is in a little glass case and it is a bit shrivelled, it is not exactly mummified, but there seems to be some skin on in. It is in a way interesting to think, yes this is the head of Catherine, that formidable lady of the fourteenth century who bossed the Popes of the day and dragged them down from Avignon to Rome to do their duty there. But I don't know whether from a more spiritual point of view it helps one to feel more closely in contact with St. Catherine. I am not so sure that I felt more closely in touch with her, that I had a more vivid sense of her presence, or her historical reality after seeing her head - or what remained of it. I think I would much rather read Father Raymond's biography, a biography written by someone who knew her intimately for many years of her life. I think that brings one far closer to the woman than just the sight of what was left of her head. But of course in Buddhism we don't have this arm and leg business so much. Relics are usually little tiny bits of bone or

even pearl like objects. These are called sariras. It is believed that Enlightened people often secrete in their bones little pearl like objects, I have seen quite a few of these. And these are usually regarded as the real ( ? ) and one hears all sorts of strange stories about them. A bhikkhu who came to see me some months ago, but who died subsequently, ( ? ) from Singapore, he told me some extraordinary stories about relics from his personal experience. Relics multiplying and transferring themselves from one place to another, and then.., this was in the case of these little pearl like objects, putting them in a drawer and then opening the draw five minutes later and there were ten times as many. Things like that which he solemnly vouched for from his direct personal experience. And I didn't feel inclined to disbelieve him. So one might say Buddhist relics are a bit different, perhaps, from Christian relics, in the sense that they are less gruesome. Though they are associated with the actual physical body of the original person but they are not bits and pieces of it in quite the crude way that one finds in the West. Except perhaps with the Tibetans, they seem to go in for mummifying bodies of departed Yogis and Lamas and so on and just keeping them complete. I think the Chinese do this, don't they. I don't know that I personally find this all that inspiring, it seems almost the wrong sort of emphasis in a way. Was he his body, so to speak. But perhaps it does help some people. Perhaps some people do feel quite inspired seeing the mummified, gilded mummy of Hui Neng, for instance, which does still exist. Perhaps they do feel spiritually more in touch. One shouldn't, perhaps, lay down any rules for other people in this respect. But personally I don't think I am very much stirred by relics, though I am quite happy about stupas.

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V: If we were to come into possession of one of these sariras, as you called them. We had quite good evidence that it did come, say, from an Enlightened person, would you think.., would you advise that we make it a centre piece for a shrine, say?

S: I think normally relics of that sort are enclosed in stupas. The stupa, if it is a small one can be kept on the shrine, but this is the usual practice. And of course the bigger the stupa the better, and it is usually kept quite separately and independently. Because it is, from one point of view, like having two Buddhas on the same altar, ( ? )-if the sarira, the relic, does represent the Buddha. But if one couldn't build a large stupa by all means have a little miniature one, keep the relic in that and have it on the shrine.

Suvajra: The second part to my question - I think you have articulated it actually. I don't want to bring up the subject too early, but life is precarious. ~at are we going to do with you Bhante?

S: Well, life is precarious, what am I going to do with you! (Laughter) ( ? ) not too sure.

V: There are more of us than there is of you, so there is always going to be somebody around after you go.

S: I don't in the least mind what anybody does with me. I don't have any particular ideas on

the subject at all. Scatter my ashes in the garden of Padmaloka, maybe send just a few to ( ? ) - I did spend quite a few years in India. Could even have a few in Spain if you like, I don't mind. I won't be knowing anything about it.

V: ( ? ) Embalming?

S: No, I don't think I like the idea of embalming. (Laughter) Thmean not for anybody, as regards to myself well I wouldn't be around to bother but I think I don't on the whole like the idea of embalming. I think it represents an over emphasis on the body and the importance of the body. Some of us don't look too good when we are alive (laughter) ? ) what we would look like embalmed, or even gilded (Laughter) It probably wouldn't help very much.. I don't know what Abhaya would look like with a gilded beard. Probably have to replace it with gold wires or something. (Laughter)

m-Te~ananda: Now Saddhaloka has a question about Asoka.

Saddhaloka: The age of Asoka is often depicted as a ~reat goldeng age, though apprently some historians suggest ~ rather less rosy picture. What is your impression and could you indicate any useful sources which we might read to get a more rounded picture of the Asokan empire?

S: I must say I am not very up to date with regard to this material. A good history of ancient India should give you information about Asoka. There are two or three books on

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Asoka and his edicts. They are the main source, because we can be quite certain that those edicts were composed by, or dictated by, or composed under the direct guidance or instructions of Asoka himself. We can be much more sure that we have got the words of Asoka than we can be that we have got the words of the Buddha because they were actually engraved in stone during his own lifetime on his o~n instructions. So they are remarkably authentic records. So I think if we really want to know more about Asoka we must start with the inscriptions. And of course in quite recent times we have even had at least one Greek inscription established - which is really remarkable. I believe there is one in Aramaic. They do give one a very vivid picture of the (land?). I don't think there is such a thing as a proper biography of Asoka. I dought if the materials exist for a full biography. But it is interesting, we also have what is probably a contemporary portrait of Asoka because he is depicted in the gateway of the Sanchi stupa, as a small figure worshipping the Bodhi tree. You can't quite make out any features but it is definitely Asoka and definitely contemporary with him. Which is again quite remarkable. There is quite a bit of legendary material about Asoka. There is Asoka I have recently acquired a translation of that which I haven't yet had

time to read, and there is a lengthy introduction and that probably gives you information about Asoka which is as up to date as any which is available.

Saddhaloka: It was partly that book that I had heard ( ) glean anything from that.

S: I also suggest you look up the article in the the Encyclopedia of Buddhism. That, I must say I haven't looked at the article, I haven't even looked to see even if there is such an article but I should be very surprised if there wasn't and I imagine that that would be quite up to date at the time of writing. I have often wished that I had more time to devote to a bit of study of Asoka, because I think he is a very important figure in the history of Buddhism. I am not thinking so much of the legendary Asoka but of the historical Asoka. I mean important especially on account of his quite conscious repudiation of violence after a series of important victories, simply as a result of a moral revulsion.

Tejananda: Now Suvajra has a question on the Vedic hearth.

Suvajra: You speak of the Vedic hearth and the parasol ( ) stupa after the initial architectural form had been set. When I was in India I noticed that nearly every Buddhist monument had nearby or in it, or on it some Hindu ( ) M-ect of worship. I wondered if it could be possible that the hearth on top of the stupa represents not the universal Brahminism along the ethnic but more the ethnic actually over- coming the universal. If the Brahmins hadn't actually ( ) one along and placed it on to themselves made it a place of Hindu worship or Vedic worship.

S: To the best of my knowledge, and I am mainly following Wvinda here, those elements were introduced or incorporated

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by the Buddhists themselves. When it comes to art and architecture I suppose, even a universal religion, has at least initially to make use of ethnic elements. Just as in terms of language one has to make use of whatever words are ready to hand and gradually give them ones own meaning. And I think that is a rather different phenomenon from the deliberate building of Hindu shrines next to Buddhist monuments such as one does see in modern times.

The umbrella, for instance, is one might say a Hindu symbol, it is pre-Buddhistic but the Buddhists took it over and made it into a symbol of spiritual sovereignty, the Buddha's spiritual sovereignty over the three worlds. But you still get the symbol of the umbrella as an emblem of sovereignty even today, the president of India has a white umbrella held over him on ceremonious occasions, just as in ancient times.

Tejananda: Now Abhaya has a question on the Buddha Prabhutaratna.



Abhaya: I feel this question is a bit far fetched, I would like to drop it actually.

S: They seem disappointed.

V: I think it was a good question.

Abhaya: Do you think so?

V: Yes.

Abhaya: Well alright. (laughter)

S: I could always give a far fetched reply.

Abhaya: I couldn't help noticing a correspondance between the stupa as reliquary or tomb containing the intact body of Abundant Treasures, and the pyramid as tomb containing the mummified bodies of the Egyptian kings with their treasures. I must wonder whether the might, culturally speaking, these might be two variations of man's desire to preserve the leader.

S: Hmm. Is it generally agreed that the pyramids are tombs?

Abhaya: That's what I always assumed.

S: I think there is some difference of opinion on that point. But anyway, lets take it that they were tombs. Not all tombs were pyramids, anyway, even if some pyramids were tombs. But yes, 'man's desire to preserve the leader'. Well, yes I think there is something in that. What about Lenin in his tomb? (Pause) If you don't have cremation you are left with the body, so in a sense you do have to preserve it. Unless you just bury it in the ground, if you have it in a tomb above ground you have actually preserved it. We do that with the bodies of the kings and queens of England and so on, and even the bodies of Heros like Wellington and Nelson.

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So is there something in human beings that wants them to

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preserve the physical presence of their leaders? Perhaps there is. In some primitive communities they bury you underneath the floor of the hut, don't they. I think there is something in this, but how operative it is it is difficult to say. Can you think of any other examples of leaders whose body have been preserved, like Lenin's was? It does seem strange in away that you preserve Lenin almost like you would have preserved the body of a saint.

And people go and pay their respects to it. And it is embalmed, isn't it, and you see it through a little window or something.

Abhaya: Some of the Popes are preserved, aren't they?

S: Yes, and some of the Dalai Lamas, of course. It is sort of talismanic, I think.

Abhaya: Also, rather, perhaps in last night's terms, an over preoccupation with the material.

S: Perhaps there is the belief that some of the mana, the primitive power and energy attaching to that person, somehow lingers on in his physical body and the tribe or the group want to keep hold of that. I think in the case of the Egyptian pyramids, or any kind of Egyptian tombs, the idea was rather different. I think the idea was that your physical body had to be preserved and survive intact to ensure the continuation of your subtle body in the other world. I think that was the reason behind that, which was of course rather different from the Indian, certainly from the Buddhist way of looking at things. Or different from the Christian way of looking at things for that matter. So that the tomb in the case of the Egyptians, or in the case of the Pharaohs and other rich people who could afford the tomb, it was for the sake of the person entombed, not for the sake of the group that he left behind. So to that extent there is an important difference. Of course there is a theory that pyramids were initiation chambers I don't know how much scientific credence that has, it's certainly believed in some occult circles.

V: Have you ever visited a pyramid, Bhante?

S: I've not been inside one, but I have seen the pyramids outside Cairo on a visit to Cairo some years ago. They featured in the news recently when there was that trouble in Cairo, because they are very near the tourist hotel area and it was quite a surprise to me going to the outskirts of the city and there were the pyramids at the end of the street. You don't see the streets in the travel agency pictures of them, but actually they are literally at the bottom of the street. The city has crept out towards them. I don't know if anybody else has seen them.

V: I've seen them.

V: I'd wondered if you had got a personal impression of them as being tombs when you were actually there.

S: I can't say that I did. They are very impressive, because they are so big. And the sphinx is very impressive, though battered. I certainly didn't get any particular

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impression of them being tombs or feeling. But perhaps that means nothing, if the body isn't

there why should you. Assuming that there was a body originally. I went, of course, to Crete, to Gnosos and there is a theory, one German scholar wrote a book about it, that the so called palace there is in fact an enormous tomb. And I could believe that, the evidence seemed quite convincing, and there the bodies of the well to do were preserved in great jars. Jars weren't for pickles or wine, they were for bodies, according to this theory. I have the book here. Anyway, let's get off the subject.

Tejananda: Ruciraketu had a question about akasha.

Ruciraketu: This question is about the relationship between the elements space and consciousness. There are really two suggestions. First of all in the lecture you say that space comes half way between matter and spirit or consciousness. I just wondered, what do you mean by this. And also, in the stupa or five element practice does the element space include the consciousness element found in the six element practice?

S: Yes, not so much includes it but in the case of the Five element you don't differentiate between the fifth and sixth as you do in the six element symbolism. It is a further refinement, you might say, in the case of the six element symbolism. And what was the other point?

Ruciraketu: In the lecture you say that space comes half way between matter and spirit or consciousness. What do you mean?

S: The term akasha doesn't mean..., well space is really a quite misleading translation, firmament would be nearer, perhaps. It is certainly a distinct level of being. If earth, water, fire and air, represent the gross material, akasha represents, perhaps one could say, the subtle material. And in that sense is mid-way between the material and that which is conscious, or between matter and consciousness. I think Govinda goes into this, doesn't he. It is even, sometimes, in a way-though don't take this too literally - a bit like the collective unconscious.

Kulamitra: Can you say why?

S: Well it isn't really an objective, external dimension. Some Hindu texts, ancient ones, speak of the akasha of the heart, the space you experience when you enter into your own heart. So it is an inner dimension, not an external one. But if you say it is inbetween matter and consciousness, in a sense it is neither subjective nor objective. But it is a higher dimension of being accessible from within rather than accessible from without. For instance in the series of the four rupa dhyanas there is the sphere of infinite space but that is something that you experience in the dhyana state, it is a dhyana. It is not something that you open your eyes and see, it is something that you close your eyes and experience. But it isn't the transcendental dimension.

Cittapala: Where would it relate in the five skandhas, or would you not be able to ...

S: Within the five skandhas. I am not sure that it features there at all, I am not so sure that it belongs to that system of classification, I would have to check that. No, just a moment, no I remember now - it is a long time since I have studied these things. There is a difference of opinion between all the different early schools, but some schools, you have to look up which, regarded akasha as an unconditioned element.

V: The Sarvastivada:-

S: The Sarvastivadins regarded it as an unconditioned element. Different schools had different lists of unconditioned elements, some - I believe - enumerated as many as five. But the Sarvastivadins enumerated the akasha as an unconditioned element because it could not be.., well it was uncompounded, it could not be divided. But probably that way of looking at it represents a rather unsophisticated philosophical attitude. But that was their traditional view. But then a question would arise, what about those schools that didn't regard it as unconditioned, where would they put it; I'm afraid I can't remember where they would put it, if they would put it anywhere. One would just have to look up a (table of reference?) of the different dharmas according to the Abhidharma of the different schools. Again there should be an article in the Buddhist encyclopedia. I have mentioned it once already, perhaps I should make the point now, that, though it is not complete, they have only got as far as D I think, but still as far as they have got - it is a very useful work, for topics which are contained within those letters of the alphabet. There are very useful articles on Bodhicitta, Bodhisattva, Buddha, for instance, Avatamsaka, Arya, and so on. I have the issues that have so far come out in the Order library, in fact I not so very long ago got them up to date, and it is a very useful work. There is a lot of use.., the most useful articles are generally by Japanese scholars whose work has been translated into English. So through those articles one gets access to information one might not otherwise have available.

V: Just coming back to this space and consciousness. Thfind it really hard to imagine consdiousness without space, without akasha. I can't imagine how it would experience itself, as it were. How consciousness could be there without akasha; it is really the difference between the two that I am trying to understand.

S: Perhaps one could say that in the case of akasha, though IT is something you experience, you so to speak regard it as external to yourself.

V: When you speak of the dhyanas, when you speak of the stage of infinite space and then infinite consciousness you do say that the stage of infinite space is, as it were, objective, and infinite consciousness subjective.

S: Yes, because the usual distinction that is made between them is that first of all you are aware of infinite space,

which doesn't so much mean that there is a thing called infinite space of which you are conscious; infinite space is, in a way, self contradictory. Space is neither, actually, finite nor infinite. If one is thinking of the Western notion of space rather than the Indian notion of akasha, it's neither finite nor infinite, it neither has an end nor doesn't have an end. But anyway, one thinks of it, or rather one experiences it, this is an explanation which is often given, as a freedom from obstruction. Akasha represents the experience within oneself of a complete freedom from obstruction. But nevertheless, at the time that you experience that freedom from obstruction, that feeling that you can move unimpeded in any direction, you are conscious of that. So you are conscious of akasha, you are conscious of space, so there is space and there is the consciousness of space. So having achieved the experience of space, and the consciousness of space, you then proceed to separate, so to speak, the consciousness of space from space itself. So you are left with the consciousness of space, so to speak, but without the consciousness of space. So you are left just with consciousness, and you reflect that just as space is without limit, in the sense of you're not experiencing any obstruction in whatever direction you move, so your consciousness is likewise free from obstruction, or in a sense infinite. In that way you make the transition from the first to the second arupa dhyana.

V: How do you reflect if you are in the arupa dhyana?

S: Well you don't. This is something that I have gone into several times before. What I have basically said is that one can't take literally this notion that in the dhyanas beyond the first dhyanas that there is absolutely no mental activity at all. Often it is said that you develop the higher dhyanas then you come back to the first dhyana in order to allow the rearing of vitakka and vicara, so that you can then develop insight. Well this is not untrue but it is grossly literalistic. What it really means is that remaining poised in the higher dhana you allow a very subtle type of vitakka/vicara to arise, which arises without any real detriment to your experience of that higher state of consciousness. And it is on the basis of a, with the help of that very subtle, mental activity, which is so subtle that maybe it doesn't even feel like a mental activity - it is more like a just seeing, without any mental activity. With the help of that you develop vipassana. So it is much the same way that you see, you experience, the difference between the so-called sphere of infinite space and the so-called sphere of infinite consciousness.

Prakasha: In the lecture you spoke of the elements in different ways, you spoke of them in terms of energy, of which akasha was the sort of primordial energy, of which the others were like waves in the ocean. You spoke of it in terms of personal, psychological energy, and you spoke of it in terms of different types of person. It would seem, I mean I am probably taking it all too literally...

S: That is to say different types of people, differentiated in accordance with which type of energy is dominant.

Prakasha: I might be taking it too literally, but it would

seem to equate akasha with some sort of transcendental experience, but in this discussion you said that akasha was short of the transcendental.

S: Yes, though when, in the context of the five element symbolism - akasha there does represent the transcendental, because what else would represent the transcendental. But it is only when you have five, or six or more, elements in your stupa, so to speak, or five or six or more levels within reality that akasha does not have to represent the highest level of all, that is to say the transcendental. In very early Buddhist texts, as in Vedic texts, akasha, more often than not, represents the Absolute, or represents the transcendental. This is our rather analytical way of looking at it, but perhaps in those days they weren't so analytical in that sort of way. They didn't feel the same need to divide and subdivide.

Tejananda: Now I have got a question on the Buddha's eyes. In the lecture, after correlating the five elements of the stupa with the five psychic centres you say that the addition of the h~naka is equivalent to the level of the eyes. However it would actually seem to come between the navel and the plexus levels, on the basis of this correlation. Could you explain this?

S: I think the different systems, or correspondences don't always fit. The fact that you interpolate the vedic altar means that in some ways you discolate the system. I think if you want to correlate it you have got to work, as it were, from the eyes downwards. So the accumulated point, if that corresponds to the Ushnisha, well that should be right at the top, the chakra if it corresponds to the chakra outside the physical body, just above it - it doesn't correspond then to the chakra between the eyebrows. Perhaps you could say that when the eyes are painted on the side of the (hanacka?) in a way, almost, pictorial considerations have taken over, and you have to ignore the rest of the symbolism, in a way. Or not try to insist on too close a correspondence. I have seen those, both of those big stupas, near Kathmandu, some of you may have done so, Boudanath and Swyambu. Last year I was writing about them in my memoirs of that period.

V: Do you think we ought to have eyes on our stupas Th the new society? (Laughter)

S: Well it is a very distinctive type of stupa. They look really magnificent, but they are enormous. I am not so sure whether we should do that, it does look a bit odd. It is alright in that landscape, and that setting, and surrounded by those hundreds of little shrines and so on and so forth. I think in this country, at least for the next hundred years or so, probably it would look a bit bizarre. Govinda, though, in his - I am not sure which book it is - perhaps it is the one on multidimensional consciousness, he does give a diagram, or there is a painting by him, showing the Buddha form within the stupa. Perhaps you should look at that and see how he correlates the elements of the symbolism. Because, in a way, Tejananda is right, it is almost as though the eye corresponds to the heart centre, which isn't the case

at all There are inconsistencies in symbolism, sometimes. Well not so much in the symbolism itself, but when different ideas or interpolated into the symbolism in such a way that they rather discolate it, and the symbolism loses some of its original significance, or has to lose some of it, in order to accomodate the new element. For instance, in the case of pagoda, that is a good example. You have just taken the spire, as it were, you have just taken the fire element in the symbolism and subdivided that into a number of stories, and that has become the complete stupa or dagaba . So in a way there is an element of distortion. Can you think of other possible illustrations of that sort of distortion? (Pause)

V: Some of the Thai style ones seem to be just a spire.

S: I don't think that is so, I think all the elements are very elongated. Perhaps the square base is missing, it is more like the dome, the dome becomes a very elegant elongated sort of bell and then on the bell there is superimposed a whole series - well a spire. So the stupa is reduced more or less to those elements. No doubt if you look closely you could see vestiges of the other elements, they would be just a band or a border or something of that sort.

V: I was just wondering if any of the pictorial representations, how they vary from culture to culture, would tell you anything about the state of Buddhism in those countries?

S: I am not so sure about the state of Buddhism, but surely something about the national psyche.

V: Do you think the Tibetan stupa has remained more or less faithful to the basic?

S: Even in India there were many different types of stupa, as we know from the remains. So the Tibetan stupas are modelled on some of those. Around Bod~aya there are all sorts of model votive stupas, there are all sorts of patterns, all sorts of types. But probably the most familiar Tibetan type is the chorten, as they call it, which is the one with the square base, then the steps and then the inverted kalasha and then on top of that the spire and so on. When it is well done it is a very pleasing shape, sometimes it is rather clumsily done, then it doesn't look so appealing.

Tejananda: Now a question from Virananda on the stupa and levels of the higher evolution.

Virananda: The path of the higher evolution can be seen as five progressive stages of consciousness. Could these be correlated with the five elements and the five element symbolism of the stupa?

S: I think probably yes, though you might have to do some violence to the one or the other in order to correlate them effectively, I am not sure about that. But broadly speaking, I think I have said, the stupa does represent the higher and the lower evolution. Earth and

water on which are super- imposed fire and air. The solar superimposed on the lunar.

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I have thought about this a bit, from time to time since giving this lecture, not just in connection with this lecture. I think actually it is quite important, I think you can even think in terms of religions.- this is one of the thoughts I've had, as either lunar or solar religions. I think, for instance, of Christianity more as a lunar religion, because it is based ultimately on the earth's cycle, it is based on the conception of birth and death and resurrection. Christ is the risen God, originally the god of harvest, the god of spring and so on and so forth. So you have got all that type of lunar symbolism, based on the cycle of the year, with all sorts of agricultural and vegetative connections. The cult of Osiris comes in there, the cult of Adonis.

Buddhism seems entirely a solar religion, you don't get any of this birth, death and rebirth imagery at all. In fact the cycle of birth and death and rebirth is something that one is emancipated from. So Buddhist symbolism is associated with the hero who fights with the forces representing the material world, the forces representing the womb and the mother and the earth, and so on, and goes on the higher path. In Vedic myth and legend the path of the moon leads to the world of the fathers and the path of the sun leads to the world of the gods. So I think you can make a broad distinction between religions in this sort of way. It's just a thought I've had, I have not worked anything out in detail, but do you see what I am driving at? You can see where Christian imagery, the imagery of the resurrection comes from. That sort of imagery is totally absent from Buddhism, you notice. There the images are all of light.

Dhammarati: How would the emphasis that you have made on spiritual androgyny, and the ( ? ) of masculine and feminine fit in with that idea, Bhante?

S: I don't see masculine and feminine, yin and yang, as equal. I don't see integration as consisting in the balance of the one against the other. I see integration as consisting of the absorption of yin within yang, much as in Tantric Buddhist art you see the tiny figure of the Dakini clinging on to the much larger figure of the Buddha. I see it in those sort of terms. Do you see what I mean? Because if you have the yin and the yang as equal and opposite, or opposite and equal, well you need in that case a third element to synthesise them, but if you are only operating with the symbols of yin and yang then that third element is missing, so you can only synthesise them by, in a sense, subordinating the one to the other and the stronger, or the higher let us say, incorporating the other. It is not that you have the two halves of the sphere coming together, it means that you've got a lower level being incorporated into a higher level, the lower evolution into the higher evolution. You haven't got the lower evolution and the higher evolution side by side, as it were, and balancing. So I think this is the basis of the great distinction, as far as I can see, between Buddhism and Taoism. In Taoism the yin and the yang are balanced. But using those terms, which of course are not Buddhist terms, in Buddhism, the yin is incorporated into the yang, the material principle is incorporated into the spiritual principle, to put it crudely.



Dhammarati: Does that have implications for practice in terms of the masculine qualities in relation to the feminine qualities?

S: In some ways it does, because, supposing you decide you are lacking in the feminine qualities, and you want to develop them, well what does develop mean - it is an active process. You have to take some initiative to develop those feminine qualities. According to the Mahayana virya is necessary with regard to all the Paramitas. Though, yes, there is separate Paramita, but you musn't imagine that virya doesn't exist on the level of the other Paramitas. So you need virya even to develop ksanti. So let's be very paradoxical, you need to be a man in order to be a woman. Or put it this way, to paraphrase it, to be her best a woman needs some of the qualities of a man. She can't be her best without some of the qualities of a man, because how is she to develop those woma~ yin qualities without some element of yang, or how can she bring her natural womanly qualities to perfection without some element of yang? So it isn't a question of holding the two in balance, because, as I said, that would presuppose a balancing agent. I won't go into the sociological implications of this at the moment, that is a rather more complex issue, we'll stay with the stupa.

Dhammarati: At the highest levels where you have, for instance, compassion, represented by figures like Avalokitesvara and prajna represented by female figures like Prajnaparamita, and wisdom represented as a more feminine quality, do you still see that kind of ( ) ?

S: No I don't see wisdom as presented as a feminine quality at all, because Prajnaparamita is transcendental, so the transcendental has transcended any such distinctional dichotomy as masculine or feminine. The question still arises, why, if there is a definite reason, the transcendental in the case of Prajnaparamita is represented as being in the female form. That is a separate question I don't think one can speak of the transcendental as being feminine any more than one can really speak of it as being masculine, it transcends that kind of dichotomy.

Abhaya: Why do you think that is?

S: I have given some thought to that but I haven't come to any conclusions as yet. Conze mentions that prajna is grammatically feminine, and that may have led to a feminine iconographic representation of prajna. It is rather interesting that in Hebrew the Hebrew word for wisdom is gramatically feminine, there is no iconographic representation of wisdom in Judaism, but wisdom is spoken of as female in the Book of Wisdom. So again that is rather interesting. There must be some reason, perhaps. This is something that I have been thinking about but I haven't come to any definite conclusion.

Dhammarati: There is no suggestion (that its not as simple as the activity of compassion and the rece~tjv~o f wisdom?) you've got a sort of forceful masculine ( ) in the one hand and the more receptive, (or its liable on this level?)

qualities that would be seen as more feminine, more receptive or passive.

S: Well why should one think of wisdom as being receptive rather than active? For instance the Green Tara is said to embody wisdom which is swiftly attained. There is no suggestion of receptivity, it's swiftness, which suggests activity. Some of the Dakini figures are intensely active. But it is quite interesting that in several important traditions wisdom should have been represented as a female figure. I think this does probably require some investigation, there is probably a psychological reason for that but what it might be I have not as yet been able to think. In the Gnostic tradition, again, Sophia - wisdom is very definitely a female figure. So there are three important traditions there in which wisdom is a female figure, that is to say the Buddhist - especially the Vajrayanic, the Hebrew wisdom tradition and also the gnostic tradition. You've got prajna, hokma and sophia, are all female or feminine.

V: You don't get it in Islam, where you have got Sufism.

S: Well Islam is austerly monotheistic

V: I was thinking more of Sufism than Islam.

S: I don't remember any wisdom concept in Sufism but I won't be completely sure that there isn't. I certainly don't recollect anything of that sort.

V: In the Greek tradition?

S: Well soph~ia is I believe grammatically feminine but Sophia as a wisdom goddess seems to pertain to the gnostic tradition rather than the classical Greek tradition. Athene does represent wisdom but not quite in the same way, not in the same sort of metaphysical-cum-spiritual way that these other wisdom figures do. I think in orthodoxy, in the Eastern orthodox church there is a wisdom figure, I am just trying to remember, which is distinct from the Virgin Mary, represented as a female angel, red in colour with red wings, there are icons of the figure. There are also some in the English mystics of the seventeenth century, I believe, one or two had visions of wisdom in female form, some quite heterodox mystics. So one wonders whether there is any psychological or spiritual basis for this. Anyway, let's pass on.

(end of tape 11)

Tejananda: Now Dharmadhara has a question on stupa visualization.

Dharmadhara: Where did the specific form of the stupa in our visualization practice come from? Did it have a sutra basis or had you seen a model of a cube, sphere, cone, and so on or

had you pieced it to ether?

S: No, this is a basically Tibetan tradition which I had heard quite a lot about from Mr Chen. It isn't anything that I~have

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pieced together myself. He was very interested in this type of visualization and practiced it quite extensively.

Dharmadhara: Did you see a traditional model of it?

S: I think so, I can't remember for sure, I think I did. I think its sometimes represented in thankas. The basic structure is, in any case, quite clear. But I think it was from Mr Chen that I got the idea of the visualized stupa in this particular way, this particular form. He spoke about it quite a lot. Of course in the Theravada you have the visualization of circular casinas of different colours, which is in principle the same kind of thing, but they are always circular in shape; either red, blue, yellow, white, in colour.

Tejananda: Suvajra has a question on the same topic.

Suvajra: Listening to your lecture of the stupa I found the image, personally, very very stimulating, of the stupa. I always have found it stimulating, I think many others do also. But the way in which~sualizethestua doesn't seem to match up with the almost transcendental aspect that you brought out in your lecture, especially synthesising higher and higher levels - and the highest one of all of course being the synthesis of time and eternity. Do you not think in some way we are doing an in~ustice to the practice in the way that we do it?

S: In a sense, perhaps, yes. Yes, perhaps the visualized stupa has to become more the centre of those sort of associations, those sort of reflections. Because when you do the six element practice of giving back one's personal elements in the surrounding universe, that is a vipassana practice. But when you merely visualize the stupa, that is not a vipassana practice unless of course you reflect in a certain way. And you can certainly make the visualized stupa a basis for the sort of reflections, for the sort of insights, if you like, that I have mentioned in the course of the course of the lecture. One could certainly do that, and develop a much stronger feeling for the five elements, even associating them with their respective, corresponding Buddhas.

Suvajra: Do you think we could compose a saddhana with stuttis?

S: One could. I was thinking of something like, supposing you visualize the element earth. Alright you visualize a yellow square and you can dwell upon that and visualize it as brilliantly yellow and shining, and then you can associate it with the Buddha Ratnasambhava,

and you can think of it as representing not just cohesiveness in the mundane sense but absolute spiritual, even transcendental stability. And associate those sort of ideas and feelings with that symbol, that visualized symbol, that visualized element in such a way that a certain insight arises. I haven't thought of this before but all the Buddha's are associated with jnanas, with awarenesses as Gunter calls them, one could perhaps see what was the connection between that visualized brilliant yellow square and that

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particular wisdom. What's the wisdom of Ratnasambhava.

V's: Equality.

S: Equality, yes, so that ties in very with the stability, the squareness. It's the wisdom of sameness, samathajana. And then of course in the case of Amitabha, moving round the mandala - no how would you move round. If you turn next to the white sphere - what would you correlate that with, presumably that is Vairochana, he is at the centre of the mandala and he holds the wheel which is circular. That seems to go~ to be true: The jnana of Vairochana is the dharmadhatu jnana, so this is the absolute, perfection, wholeness, which is often symbolised in many traditions by a sphere. In Greek thought the sphere is the symbol of perfection, completeness, wholeness. Then you move on to Amitabha, red in colour, the red cone, red is the colour of fire, the colour of love, passion, all that is associated with Amitabha. Meditation, well the fire represents the upward aspiration, passing through the dhyanas, but what about that pratyaksha jnana?

V: Fire burns? (Laughter)

S: That might require a little meditation, that might require a little reflection. The (Pratyameksha?) the discriminating wisdom.

V: It's pointed.

S: It's pointed, yes, that is true.

V: Fire creates light as well, it throws light on things.

S: Yes, one could say that, light as well as heat. Then we move on, where do we come to next - let's follow the stupa, the white, then the red, then there is the green. So this is usually green, the saucer shape or inverted bowl of the sky - so this is Amoghasiddhi. So how is Amoghasiddhi, the green Buddha associated with that green bowl, a green inverted sky.

V: Isn't he associated with air element, and unobstructed.

S: Air, unobstructed - yes, that's true. And the all performing wisdom, well you are able to do everything because there is no obstruction.

V: Would there be association with the double vajra as well, because they are often described as the two winds which cross, on which the universe is

S: That's true, yes. Then you come on lastly, you have the accumulated point, don't you. So presumably that ought to represent Akshobhya, though Akshobhya is blue and this is golden or rainbow~s~ But if the blue of Akshobhya represents the night sky~which are little golden flecks, do you see what I mean. Akshobhya

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is the mirror like wisdom, so how would you connect that especially with the akasha? Perhaps the akasha itself is like a mirror, the transcendental reflects the mundane in it, as the Awakening of Faith makes clear. So, I am just trying to illustrate the point that you could not only visualize the five elements but you could develop a kind of vipassana on the basis of that visualization, for instance by associating the different elements with their respective corresponding Buddhas and wisdoms.

Cittapala: Are the corresponding Buddhas with the various elements, are they exactly correlating, because there seems to be quite a number of different systems.

S: That's true, there are different systems which don't always overlap. Because there is a correlation of Buddhas with elements which may not be the one I have mentioned, because the one I have mentioned goes according to colour.

Cittapala: Right, so if you were to take it ...

S: But there are different ways of correlating. I think the important principle is, in the Vajrayana, in this respect, that you correlate. It doesn't matter how you correlate, the principle is to correlate, to correlate every set of five with every other set of five in some way or other, by hook or by crook. It doesn't have to be a completely logical, rational process.

You could even correlate the mudras of the Buddhas if you tried, I'm sure, with those five elements.

Kulamitra: In fact in the lecture you describe the jewel drop of akasha as either blue or golden hued. So the blue would fit there.

S: That's true, I can't remember why I described it as blue. I must have had some good reason. (Laughter) I can't remember now.

Kulamitra: Perhaps its correspondance with Akshobhya. (Laughter)

S: Maybe I had an intuitive realization that ... (Laughing)

Suvajra: One of the things that particularly appealed to me with regard to the stupa was the synthesis of higher and higher levels. So how would you incorporate that aspect?

S: I'm not sure, I haven't given thought to that. I am sure one could~ Maybe one should start by doing it dramatically and then try to produce something aesthetically pleasing and inspiring. One can also, in another practice, not just visualize the elements in the way that we usually do but visualize their respective bija mantras. I can't remember them all, I remember iang is the bija mantra for fire, the r with a little dot over it. Again you could visualize them in a mandala.

V: What about visualizing them internally, the stupa internally?

S: That too one can do, also via their respective bijas.

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I think it is a very positive exercise, if that is the right word, to think of oneself, one's body, as a stupa.

V: Why?

S: Well your body symbolises you, your being, and to think of yourself as a stupa, to think of your body as a stupa means thinking of yourself as an embodiment of reality and the different aspects or manifestations of reality.

Tejananda: The last question is from Susiddhi and is about stupas and modern Theravada.

Susiddhi: I just wondered how modern Theravadins regarded the stupas in their lands. Are they merely reliquaries or do they have some symbolic significance, at least the bhikkhus?

S: I think they tend on the whole to regard them as reliquaries. I may be wrong but I have never come across any explanation of the symbolism of the stupa along the lines, say, that Govinda has explored it, emanating from Theravada sources. It may be there are such explanations in the Theravada tradition but I don't think they have been made public, in that case. I think they must have had some knowledge of these things originally.

Susiddhi: Wasn't there a Mahayana tradition in Ceylon, at one time? Is that where the stupas came from?

S: There was but I think the stupas antedated that. As far as I know there are no

distinctively Mahayana type stupas. I think you could describe a stupa as Mahayana type if it had niches with images in, you don't find those in Sri Lanka. Some of them are very very old, the oldest stupas I think, go back to BC. Maybe not in their present form, the nucleus - because often the people encased the old stupa in another layer of brick and stone, and in that way it gradually got bigger and bigger. Because that is one of the great advantages of stupas, you can just make them bigger and bigger in that way. Even the stupa at Sanchi had been enlarged in that way, I believe, so are other well known Indian stupas. Sometimes the original nucleus is Ashokyan but it has been greatly enlarged in Gupta or Pala times. You just build another shell, as it were, around it.

Kulamitra: What about more recent stupas that the Japan Buddha Sangha has been building. Do you think they are aware of the symbolic significance, other than that they associate it with peace.

S: I am a bit doubtful, actually. I think they don't go TW to those sort of things. But certainly the Shingon school in Japan is well aware of the symbolical significance of the stupa, no less well aware than the Tibetans are, so that must be common knowledge in the scholarly Japanese circles. There are Japanese stupas which exhibit very, very clearly the element symbolism, where the base is definitely a cube and the middle section is definitely practically a perfect sphere, and the third section is

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definitely a cone. It's very, very clear from such examples that they knew exactly what the symbolism really was, or originally had been. So we seem to have done rather well with regard to the stupa. Most people seem to find it a very evocative symbol indeed. Perhaps we ought to have more miniature stupas. I have got a miniature stupa, it's down in my flat in Sukhavati, it was made in New Zealand, of all places - presented to me. I quite like that particular type. So perhaps we should have more stupas in the Movement, perhaps people keep them on their shrines and so on. And perhaps thanks of stupas. When I say thanks of stupas I mean just the symbols to help you visualize.

Cittapala: We don't seem to have actually, really, incorporated it within our system of meditation, particularly as..., it seems to be something which happens ...

S: I think I have mentioned it as part of a system of meditation, in that lecture I gave, is the stupa not mentioned?

V: No.

S: Have I included the meditation on death?

V: You included the six element practice, the elements but not the stupa visualization.

S: That's what I meant. Well one could certainly interpolate Uhat between the six element practice, and the other, samatha type practices, because the visualization as such.., well the simple visualization of the five elements would be a samatha type practice. So one would have the visualization of the five elements as a sort of transition to the six element practice. Because even with the additions that we have spoken of, even the five element practice could become a vipassana type practice.

V-: -- Just a question which I have.., I am not quite sure how to formulate it, but there was a lot of information, a lot of background building up the picture of the stupa and then there wasn't much time in the lecture to speak about the importance of that as it emerges in the White Lotus Sutra. I just wondered if there is more to say, or is it a question of just contemplating all that material?

S: I think contemplation would help. Maybe people should think in terms of preparing their own lectures on the subject. I doubt if I am going to go back to this topic in this life, I doubt it. But it can be followed up by others, there's S Govindas little book which has been republished a few years ago. And I think if one looks into the matter one would find that there were some writers on Buddhist art and architecture who also had some useful information about the stupa. I think the main authority still is ~Tol Mus and his work is called, simply Borabudur it is a study of Borabudur and its history and its symbolism, and in that connection he goes into the history and symbolism of the stupa. It hasn't been translated, it's in French, but it is one of those very, very useful works that ought to be translated into English. I have seen copies of it in French, a friend

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of mine had one once, years ago and she very kindly gave me a running translation of chunks of it which was quite useful. But there may be other works dealing with Buddhist art and architecture which have some information about the stupa. It is such a basic form, it is a basic feature of Buddhism, we ought really to know much more about it than we do.

Cittapala: I was wondering whether there were any other sutras where the stupa figured as prominently as it does in the White Lotus sutra.

S: Not to the best of my knowledge, no.

Cittapala: And since its such an important symbol I was wondering why that should be the case.

S: There is the Gandavyuha, because Sudhana, in the end comes to Vairochanas tower, as it is rendered, but actually it is a stupa - the chychXa . Maybe that could be gone into.

Kulamitra: In the Vimalakirti Nirdesa there is a whole episode which yevotves around



the stupa, isn't there?

S: Which one is that?

Kulamitra: Isn't there something about the worship of ( ), the stupa not being as beneficial as actually to practice the Dharma, and worship the stupa for a long period of time. I think it is a sort of parable.

S: I can't say I remember it off hand, but perhaps we could look that up and see.

Kulamitra: It is also very prominent in certain parts of the Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava.

S: That's true, it is.

V: The legend of the great stupa.

S: The legend of the great stupa, yes.

Kulamitra: Am I right in thinking there is actually some quite early material, doesn't Shantideva quote some material from Mahayana sutras about actual worship of stupas? In Buddhist Texts Through the Ages, is there not?

S: I don't remember. In the Theravada they worship, there is a verse called the salutation of Pali Quote There is that verse which all Theravadins who do a daily puja recite. There are some verses, which we have in the seven fold puja, well we have one of them mentioning the worship of stupas. There are many rules about bshauing with regard to stupas. About not spitting in the direction of the stupa, not urinating in the direction of a stupa, not engaging in sexual intercourse in the proximity of a stupa and all sorts of things like that, in other words treating the stupa

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with respect. Always going around it keeping it to the right.

V: I sometimes feel that maybe we lose.., when I first discovered in Shantideva that word which we use as shrines, is in fact chaitras I felt that somehow shrines doesn't conjure up the same evocation as the actual meaning of the verse.

S: Well the word chaitr~ is often used in the sense of Thtupa but it has a broader meaning. It is pre-Buddhistic. We don't really what..., a chait can be almost anything which is venerated, a tree in the Buddha's day was sometimes regarded as chait~a , a heap of stone, a sort of cairn was a chait~a . But in Buddhism it came more and more to be a synonym with the stupa. So chait~a is usually explained as that which is heaped up, a haap of stones,~a heap of earth, you can see how the meaning develops, how it becomes associated

with stupa. And stupa, as I mentioned in the lecture, is etymologically connected with the English word stump. ( ? )

Cittapala: Do you think it will be possible to incorporate the basic geometric forms of the stupa into building a shrine? The image I had in my mind was, as it were, a stupa cut in half used at the back, and then you would have a rupa image as it were

S: I know what you mean. I think you could do it, I don't know how traditional Buddhists would regard it, as splitting it, I am not sure what they would think of that. Maybe you should think instead of having a shrine in the form of a stupa. You could certainly have an outline behind, like a stupa, you certainly could do that, yes. You would have to make the image of such proportions, or the throne of such proportions that they fitted in. So if you had a square base you might even have the eyes of the image on a level with the ~anaka of the stupa.

(end of tape 12)

Tejananda: Tonight we have got seventeen questions on the Jewel in the Lotus. But first we have got two carrying on from last night. First one is from Suvajra and it is about the stupa visualization.

Suvajra: Last night we spoke about the stupa visualization and correlating it with the five Buddhas and 5 eakin about lust making any correlation, by hook or by crook. I spent the morning's meditation trying to be a hook or a crook. I would just like to see what your thoughts are on this. I have made this, have departed from the standard practice of making the stupa a five element and made it six element by including the forehead and the crown centre. And of course that has meant that I have had to change one of the colours. I have had to change the white of the water into a blue, which has made the crown centre white.

S: There seems to be a certain logic to that.

Suvajra: Blue for water?

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S: No white for the higher centre immediately below the jewel, because white is a synthesis of all the colours.

Suvajra: With the jewel going in, of course that becomes the Vajrasattva, which I thought could represent the synthesis of eternity and time, the sixth Buddha.

S: Yes. Well certainly ( ? ) play around with the symbols of the elements.

Suvajra: What I was thinking, was, do you think it is alright to play around with the colours of the stupa in that way, because I have changed the colour of the water element.

S: Well water is sometimes thought of as blue rather than white. That isn't entirely untraditional by any means, but it would be a light blue. The yellow is a very greeny yellow but I take it that was simply your pencil. Yes, that is certainly one permutation. I think the point that I was trying to get at was that visualizing the stupa in this way shouldn't be just an exercise, just a technique, it should be imbued with some kind of feeling. If it is to be the basis for the development of vipassana then all sorts of associations should be allowed to gather around it and that obviously brings in one or another system of correlations, the five or the six of this or that, and so on.

Tejananda: Now a question from Ruciraketu about yin and yang.

Ruciraketu: We had quite a discussion this morning on this section about Buddhism being a solar religion, and not trying to balance the yin and the yang.

S: I hope no-one was taking me too literally with this, but carry on.

Ruciraketu: Well maybe we were, because we weren't really able to ...

S: It's not so much that literally Buddhism doesn't try to balance the yin and the yang, those are terms or symbols which have a definite meaning within the context of Chinese tradition. Buddhism doesn't employ those symbols. So what was the question?

Ruciraketu: Really I just wanted you to expand on this whole theme of.. Well one of the areas was this idea in Buddhism the yin would be absorbed into the yang. That you couldn't...

S: But again, don't take this literally, because I am transferring symbols of one tradition to another tradition. So one is clearly, by transferring them to a different context, in a way changing the meaning of them. Since the terms yin and yang have crept into the discussion via Lama Govinda one has to do the best with them that one can within the specifically Buddhist context. Do you see what I mean? So the yin and yang which have been incorporated in that way into Buddhist tradition are no longer, really, the yin and

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yang of Chinese tradition; in a sense. It's as though Chinese tradition is almost dualistic, thinking of everything as being a combination, in varying proportions, of yin and yang. That is not the Buddhist view. It would be almost like Buddhism regarding everything as a combination in varying degrees of, say, ( ? ) and punya, skilful and unskilful; Buddhism

goes beyond all pairs of opposites, it has a transcendent reality which it calls Buddhahood or Nirvana or whatever, and that kind of transcendent reality you do not find in Chinese tradition. Do you see what I mean?

Ruciraketu: I don't really remember this very well but I thought there was some sort of distinction between the Tao and the ten thousand things, the ten thousand things being phenomenal and Tao somehow representing the ...

S: But the Tao, again, is a quite obscure concept. Later Taoist thought did develop in a metaphysical sort of way, but possibly under the influence of Buddhism. Tao literally means the way, and some Chinese thinkers would no doubt say that the way, the Tao, was towards the yin and the yang in balance. Not so much that the Tao was a sort of metaphysical principle. Sometimes the Tao Te Ching suggests something of that sort.

Kulamitra: When you were speaking of the yang, as it were, within Buddhism, being the sort of higher principle, rather than an equal principle, within those terms, trying to get across the dynamic nature of Buddhism, as apposed to perhaps a fairly static view of life in the Chinese system?

S: I wouldn't say that the view in the Chinese system was static, exactly. Also, even in the case of Buddhism one mustn't be one-sidedly dynamic. There is, as I have said, thinking of the spiritual life, thinking of reality in terms of time, thinking of it in terms of space, there must be both, though it is beyond them both.

Padmavajra: Again, I am probably taking things too literally, but you did talk about absorbing the yin in the yang, last night, and we talked about, we brought in androgeny - absorbing almost the feminine into the masculine, and isn't that a contradiction with what you just said, talking about not being one sidedly dynamic?

S: Yes, but you see I think I also mentioned yesterday that the yang represents a higher principle. I mean transferring the term to a Buddhist context, not just a complementary principle. So to the extent that it is a higher principle it is already more integrated. I suspect that we have just created confusion by introducing the terms yin and yang, rather a similar confusion has been created by introducing the terms masculine and feminine. They sometimes carry into the new context associations which come from the old context, which are quite inappropriate, perhaps, in the new context. So that is why I said don't take these terms yin and yang, and don't take all the things I said about them in the context of the stupa too literally. That is don't think too much, or try to think too much in terms of yin and yang of strict Chinese tradition.

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Ratnaguna: Why did you bring in yin and yang into this lecture?

S: I don't remember. I think I might have done that via Wovinda, I rather suspect, though I won't be sure of that, it is fifteen years since I gave those lectures - I can't remember now. Perhaps it might have been because those terms were very current in those days, because so many of our friends, so many people coming along to our lectures were into Zen macrobiotics and they were very familiar with this terminology of yin and yang. So I might have introduced that terminology just because it was so much in the air and because it would ring a bell for so many members of the audience.

V: You don't think Buddhism lacks a language of opposites? Because we have had trouble with masculinity and femininity, haven't we, and yin and yang seems to a bit confusing. And both those sets of terms aren't really Buddhist are they?

S: That's true. Buddhism doesn't have a language of opposites Th that sort of way, and perhaps it doesn't really want to have, certainly not as far as~can make out with the Buddha's teaching, as far as we can reconstruct it.

V: There is a language in that we do have definite moral and spiritual qualities which need to be complimented with one another, like faith and wisdom. (S: Yes) Would it be only sort of methodological use of the language of opposites rather than a metaphysical language of opposites?

S: But in the case of the five spiritual faculties Buddhism doesn't characterise one pair of faculties in a general way and the other pair in another way, like the yin and yang where on that side you have got the yin faculties and on that side you have got the yang faculties; Buddhism doesn't do that. One could mention in this context the Shankia philosophy, which has its purusa and prakrati . I thought someone was going to bring that up, but again, I don't think one can compare because the purusa is definitely superior, is trasncendental, whereas prakrati is nature. So if there is a dualism it is a dualism between a higher factor and a lower factor, not between two complementary factors on, so to speak, the same level.

I think this is the difference. I think Buddhism thinks in terms of a hierarchy of values and hierarchy of levels of development in a way that Chinese thought, apparently, just doesn't at all. Chinese thought doesn't speak so much in terms of rising to a higher level, but as achieving a better balance of yin and yang. So it doesn't regard yin as superior to yang, or yang as superior to yin, but transferred to the Buddhist context you have, so to speak, to make one superior to the other. And it would seem that the so-called yang qualities, as described in Chinese tradition resemble higher spiritual qualities as described by the Buddhist tradition, more than do the qualities of yin, as described in the Chinese tradition. In Buddhism, in using Buddhist symbolism it wouldn't regard light and darkness as complementary and of equal value, it would regard light as higher than darknes~. Do you see what I mean? So it wouldn't be a question of balancing dark and lightness,

but of subordinating darkness to light.

Ruciraketu: But where you talk about achieving a better balance of yin and yang, doesn't that imply a ~ierarchy? That you can have a better balance or a lower one.

S: Yes, but at every level you have got yin and yang -

Rou see what I mean. But I don't, even so, even though if you speak in terms of a better and a worse that implies a hierarchy, but even so, to the best of my knowledge, Chinese tradition doesn't speak of or set forth a whole series of higher stages where yin and yang are better balanced and doesn't describe exactly in what that better balance consists, and so on. So it does not, in fact, constitute a spiritual path of that type.

Kulamitra: What you are saying does seem important, because I think it is not just Chinese philosophy. We were talking about this in our group yesterday, and, what they very much systematised as yin and yang does seem to be almost a way that in the West we still quite naturally fall into those sort of general groupings. Maybe that is why people could relate to yin and yang, they sort of knew what qualities were being referred to, and as you say, masculinity and femininity, that didn't quite fit those qualities. But we still sort of know what is on one side and what is on the other, but maybe we do still have here that tendency to feel that they ought to be combined on the level~rather than a hierarchy.

S: Oh yes, one finds that tendency in what one might call sexual politics. That some feminist groups maintain that masculine qualities have been in the ascendent, all the aggressive, militaristic, fascist tendencies and they must be balanced and more than balanced by the feminine qualities of tenderness, compassion, spirituality and so on and so forth. Do you see what I mean, they just think in terms of balancing. But quite apart from whether they describe the masculine and the feminine correctly they don't think in terms of a hierarchy of values but more of restoring a balance. It is true that balance does occupy an important place in the Buddhist spiritual life, balance with regard to the spiritual faculties. But for Buddhism the spiritual path is essentially a path, which suggests stages, or even its a ladder, which suggests higher and lower stages, higher and lower rungs of the ladder. That is the basic symbolism of Buddhism. You certainly don't think in terms of achieving a nice balance between samsara and Nirvana.

Dhammarati: You don't, in a sense, get a balance between samsara and Nirvana in for instance the Prajnaparamita literature? Is that not something that in a way goes beyond the hierarchical thing of ...

S: Yes, one could say that, but how do you go beyond, you go beyond by subordinating samsara to Nirvana, so to speak. Not by trying to balance the one against the other.

V: You seem to have to some extent, it strikes me, spoken in this language of opposites when you have contrasted the pleasure principle and the reality principle, and called for a balance between the two.

S: I don't think I called for an ultimate, metaphysical balance, but more that in people's ordinary lives there is an imbalance as between pleasure principle and reality principle, as there might be, for instance, an imbalance between faith and wisdom in the traditional Buddhist context. I wasn't using the word reality quite in a metaphysical sense, because how could reality contribute to an imbalance? The reality principle that is opposed to, or can be opposed to the pleasure principle, cannot, from a Buddhist point of view, be the ultimate reality at all. Because, what happens when you have too much 'reality' principle in your life (single inverted commas) and no pleasure principle, you sort of dry up, you become thin, withered, dry, dispirited - I mean, is that reality in the Buddhist sense?

Kulamitra: Going back a little bit, not answering your question there, but, the question of balance. It strikes me that, say, the Taoist symbol, it's one form of balance, because it is actually symmetrical, one half is the exact opposite of the other. But that is not the only form of balance, from a visual point of view you can have something that feels balanced but which has maybe, as it were, a large mass of darker material and a very bright smaller mass above it. That might still give a sense of balance. So maybe, I was wondering

S: I was just wondering in what sense the word balance is being used now.

Kulamitra: Well you can use it as an equal weight on this side and an equal weight on that side, but if as you are saying the two things are not actually the same, then let's say a small portion of gold on this side will actually balance a fairly large clump of earth on that side. That's also a form of balance, but it seems to be

S: But it is quite a quantitative way of looking at it. (K: Yes) So what is the actual application.

Kulamitra: Well I am just thinking that people usually want an equal amount of this and an equal amount of that, but if what you are saying is if one principle is different the balance can't be in terms of equal amounts.

S: I think there is an ambiguity in your use of the word amounts'. (K: Yes, it is) It's a bit like the question you are asked as a child, which weighs heavier, a pound of lead or a pound of feathers - do you see what I mean? (K: Yes)

V: It does seem that there is a very important point, actually, in this discussion. Because one of the things is ...

S: Yes, it has been made (Laughter) but it is not very easy to see it.

V: Sometimes I hear people in the Movement actually talking about, 'I need to balance this out', or 'I feel quite balanced at the moment.' And I feel a sort of suspicion of that kind of language.

S: Yes, I think one can rightly, on some occasions feel suspicious, because what one notices

is that people want to describe whatever they want to do in language which is acceptable

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to the group; maybe its because they are then seeing the spiritual community as a group. Nobody could say, 'I think I'll just go and get drunk tonight'. No-one will say that, they will say, 'I think I need just a little bit of alcohol, just to help me loosen up, that will be good for my spiritual development'. Do you see what I mean? So if there is something that people want and they see it as a lack, and they are not quite sure whether it is skilful or not, they will say or present it in terms of it being a balancing factor. They used to say in the old days, when I gave this lecture, 'I think I am just a bit too yang, I think I need to be a bit more yin'. (Laughter) So actually it can be a rationalization, sometimes, because you are presenting something that you want to do, and it may not be very skilful, in terms which you hope will be acceptable. The terms in this case being the terms of yin and yang and so on, and balance. And maybe this is what you are not feeling very comfortable about.

V: I kind of feel that if you speak or think in terms, if your philosophy, if your basic structure is thinking in terms of a yin and yang balance, that could of thing could slip in. Balancing spirit and nature.

S: Right, yes, 'I think I am being a bit too spiritual today.' I have actually heard this sort of thing in India in connection with Hindu holy men. I have actually heard of cases, more than one case, where a holy man might be found to be stealing or committing adultery and he would be taken to task by religious minded people and he would say, 'you have just misunderstood, actually I was in danger of just slipping into the absolute, I thought I had better commit a few sins just to keep myself down onto this earth'. (Laughter) This has actually been the sort of excuse, as we would see it, being raised by certain holy men on certain occasions. That they had to weight themselves with one or two sins otherwise their natural spirituality was such that they would be just carried away like a balloon. Anyway, perhaps you had better pass on to the questions of the evening. I suspect that as with 'masculine' and 'feminine' there is no end of discussion when it comes to the yin and yang. Rather interesting that that should be so. Perhaps that can be pondered too.

Tejananda: So the first question The Jewel in the Lotus is from Prakasha about Tibetan culture.

Prakasha: This question arose from the story about incarnate lamas wagon train across Tibet.

S: Incarnate Lamas ?

V: err caravan?

Prakasha: Caravan! (Laughter)



S: Let's hope that wasn't a Freudian slip there.

Prakasha: It's actually more about China than Tibet. And it is a three part question. China and Tibet have been Buddhist countries for many centuries. Do you think it possible that Buddhism will remerge again, particularly in China?

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S: I think it is possible, though I doubt whether it will re-emerge in its original fully traditional form. But one does get odd items of information, from time to time, that lead one to suspect that Buddhism may well be reviving in China, at least on a small scale. Though I doubt very much whether that revived Buddhism will be quite of the old traditional type. I think the old traditional type of Buddhism is probably beginning to be modified everywhere in the world.

Prakasha: Was Buddhism fairly weak in China before the revolution anyway?

S: Well, how does one estimate? It is a vast country. The condition of Buddhism could well have been different, in fact I think we know it to be different in one part of the country from what it was in another. We know that Buddhism suffered a number of persecutions in the course of the last two or three hundred years. Some people say, some historians say, I believe, that the greatest losses suffered by Buddhism were suffered in the middle of the last century during the Tai Ping rebellion, when hundreds and even thousands of monasteries and temples were destroyed and tens of thousands of monks and nuns were slaughtered. Some are of the opinion that that was the greatest disaster which struck Chinese Buddhism, from which it really never recovered, even though there were minor revivals after that, before the advent of communism. So I think there is little doubt that for some hundreds of years, even apart from the question of communism, Buddhism in China has been in a much less healthy state than it was, for instance, during the Tang and Sun dynasties, or even perhaps the Ming dynasty. But it is very difficult to generalise

when you are concerned with virtually a continent, a very large area indeed, where conditions were very, very different. But certainly, yes, I think one could say that for, perhaps, five or six hundred years Buddhism in China has been, on the whole, in a state of virtual decline, even though here and there, in certain areas, in various monasteries, Buddhism might have been thriving and there may have been good monks, good teachers, and so on. That is the general picture that emerges.

Prakasha: Obviously, to a certain extent, Chinese communism is hostile to Buddhism. However, do you think there are any positive aspects in Chinese collectives and communes that could be supportive to Buddhism if it re-emerged?

S: I don't know about supportive. There are perhaps certain structures developed in Chinese

communism which could perhaps be utilised by Buddhists. I can't be very sure about this, I just don't know enough about the situation, perhaps the situation itself is still too fluid for anybody to be able to say anything. But no doubt, whether in a communist country or any other, the order, whether monastic or non-monastic, they should be on the alert for any situation which can be utilised by Buddhists in a ( ? Buddhist ? ). I think I have mentioned, that I have had, in the earlier days of the communist revolution, before the cultural revolution, some monasteries were turned into small factories and the monks stayed on but running the factory/monastery, and fulfilling the governments requirements in terms of production and doing their best, at the same time, to carry on their religious life, doing some meditation and some pujas and so on. But fulfilling their

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production ( ? ) at the same time. At least they were all living and working together, at least they weren't forced into family life. And then?

Prakasha: China is increasingly opening up to tourists, and I gather now you can travel there almost unrestrictedly. Do you think it would be a good idea if Order Members went to China to have a look?

S: One's just been, hasn't he. We are hoping to see some slides, Devaraja has been, I think he is showing us some slides quite soon.

Dhamrmadhara: At National Order Weekend.

S: Vajrabodhi has been, from Finland. So maybe it would be a good idea. I doubt if the odd visitor would be able to form an overall impression, I think that is impossible. You could say that you had visited a particular monastery where there seemed to be some religious life, etc. etc. I don't think you could begin, at this stage, to form any sort of overall picture, but I think it would be good if people could just go and see what is left of traditional Chinese Buddhism, see its architecture, its art, its monasteries, its temples, pagodas - some of which are quite astounding. And also, I think, I~suspect that it is very encouraging for Chinese Buddhists, those who have carried on and remained faithful to Buddhism, to be in contact with Buddhists from outside China, and know that they are not forgotten, and that people have friendly feelings towards them. Even if you don't know the language and they don't know yours it is very easy to make it clear that you are a Buddhist just by going into the shrine and bowing in front of the image and lighting incense sticks, well at once they know then that you are a Buddhist, even if you can't communicate in words. And especially if you circumambulate the stupa and chant mantras; there is, so to speak, the international Buddhist language, everybody understands that.

Tejananda: Now a question from Dharmarati on sudden and gradual paths.

Dhammarati: In the lecture, Bhante, you are contrasting the myth of the return journey with the parable of the jewel in the lotus, and you talk about sudden and gradual paths. About how the Guru would choose one or the other depending on the temperament of the pupil. Is it useful for us in the Movement to think in these terms?

S: No, I think these are very misleading terms, I don't think I use them nowadays, Hui Neng in the Wei Lang said, I am probably paraphrasing him, that there is no such thing as the quick path and the slow path, it is simply that some attain Enlightenment more quickly than others. There is no short path and no long path, you could say, it is simply that some practice more intensively than others and therefore cover the same psychological and spiritual ground more quickly than others. If a plant is growing you can't make it jump certain stages of development, but by giving it extra nourishment you may cause it to grow more quickly. So sometimes people understand the short path to mean a path that somehow cuts out all the long

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and difficult preliminary stages, or something like that. But that isn't true, you have to go through all the stages all the time, because those stages are determined by the nature of your being, the very conditions under which development of any kind takes place. You can't skip any of them. But you can pass through them more or less quickly. So if one does speak in terms of a sudden path and a gradual path it can only be in that sort of way.

Dhammarati: I was going to go on to ask: Are there criteria, should we be pushing some people harder than we do. and some people less so? Are there criteria or should we

S: I take it that you are not using the word 'push' too literally. It is more a question of strong encouragement. (Laughter) I think you have to be equally careful not to expect of people more than they are actually able to do, and also not to expect of them less than they are really able to do. You can only be sure exactly how much to demand, so to speak, if you know a particular person rather well. It is no good, say, recommending to a very new Friend that they go on a long solitary retreat unless you really know that they can benefit from that and that they are ready for that. This brings us back to the question of spending time with Mitras and knowing them, because Mitras will ask your advice, and how can you possibly give your advice unless you have got really supernatural insight, unless you know them quite well, know their strengths, know their weaknesses, know their background, their psychological conditioning, their temperament, and so on. Otherwise you might lightly give certain advice and it can sometimes do a lot of damage, or at least not help that particular person very much. So it does seem more and more important that Order Members should know their Mitras.

Susiddhi: Bhante, when you were speaking just now you said 'some people gain Enlightenment more quickly than others'. Do you use the term 'gain Enlightenment', in the sense of insight arising, or insight coalescing into a continual Enlightenment?

S: I was using the word 'Enlightenment' in the full sense, but the principle applies at every stage of the path, some attain it more quickly than others, some attain stream-entry more quickly than others. Some attain ( ? ) one might say, more quickly than others, and so on. Sometimes it is because they have got fewer impediments, fewer problems, sometimes because they just make a more vigorous effort. But you can see, even among Mitras and Order Members, some progressing more quickly than others, one can see it sometimes very clearly. Sometimes you see - well I have noticed this recently in the case of several people, several Mitras - that they put on a spurt, suddenly. And that is quite encouraging to see. Perhaps you don't see them for six months, or twelve months, and then they come and see them again and you see a very noticeable change, a very noticeable difference, they have really put on a spurt. And you start thinking, well yes, they are within measurable distance of Ordination now, whereas twelfth month ago one could not have said that. Twelve month~ago one might have said it might have taken them two years it might take them ten, one couldn't say; but suddenly after a year they have made quite noticeable progress. As I have said,

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it is very encouraging to see that.

Tejananda: Now Suvajra has a question on the same subject.

Suvajra: I will have to rephrase this slightly in the light of what you have said. You speak about the Guru using two methods, the gradual and the sudden, in your lecture.

S: Yes, but in the light of what I have said that needs to be, not even rephrased, it needs to be translated, doesn't it.

Suvajra: Well the way you were talking about it in the lecture is that the sudden method would be, depending on the temperament of the pupil, the Guru confronts with ultimate truth immediately. So I was wondering, have any of our teachers ever used that particular method with you?

S: I don't recollect, no. Though again it is a subtler matter than it would appear to be, because it is not that ultimate truth is this and it isn't that. Ultimate truth can be presented, so to speak, in any terms. In some ways you are presented with ultimate truth every moment of your life, when you change the flowers in your room because you see that they are faded, so then you are presented then, or confronted then with an ultimate truth, the truth of impermanence. I don't think that any of my teachers ever, as it were, deliberately and consciously confronted me with an ultimate truth in that sort of way; perhaps their methods were subtler than that. I think it is more often that life presents you with situations in which you are less likely to ignore ultimate truth than in other situations. When you are bereaved of

somebody or you suffer some other dreadful loss, or your health is seriously affected, or you suddenly realise something about yourself that you hadn't realised before, which perhaps is not very pleasant. Or perhaps you suddenly realise that you have been fooling yourself, or tormenting yourself about something quite unnecessary; let's put it in somewhat more positive terms.

Suvajra: The second part was: ~ou ever used that method on people within the FWBO?

S: Well there are degrees of reality. I have sometimes put a certain point to somebody, or brought them up against a certain fact, often about themselves, a little more sharply than usual. Sometimes that does seem to be required, but again, one has to be quite careful, because some people take very seriously what one says and one may speak just a few words in a sense quite lightly, but they may take them very, very seriously, and they may have a very strong effect and therefore one has to try to gauge that, to judge that, so that you don't speak in fact more strongly than you intended. Because it isn't a matter of using a lot of words or raising one's voice, or shouting, or beating them over the head with a stick, or anything like that. People are such, that sometimes, in certain situations, people can be quite devastated by an apparently quite casual word. So one has to be quite careful about this. But sometimes one does feel that one has said quite clearly, but in a way quite gently, a number of times to someone, and they don't seem to have grasped the point, so then, one may put it a little more strongly, or confront the person concerned with whatever it is that you

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wanted to say in a more forcible manner, or a more direct manner, with less beating about the bush, so to speak. It also depends how well you know them, what degree of confidence they have in you.

Tejananda: Now a question from Dhammarati on the Pure Land aesthetic.

(end side one)

Dhammarati: Listenin to the lecture Bhante I was struck b a contrast between the highly idealized, visionary land- scapes of the White Lotus Sutra's pure land--with th~ flat land, the jewel trees, the golden grid and so on; and the very concrete nature imagery of much Chinese and Japanese literature, where natural accidents, mountains to frogs jumping into ponds become central sublects. Could you say anything about the different quality of spiritual experience which would produce such different expressions. Do the differences stem from different levels of spiritual experience, or from different temperaments, or cultural differences?

S: You are speaking of one particular type of Chinese and Tapanese art, because there is another kind of Chinese and Japanese art which endeavors to illustrate the Pure Land quite literally, with all the jewel trees and so on and so forth. And of course, actually, Chinese Buddhists, did actually create miniature jewel trees, you can see these in antique shops

sometimes. And there are some rather poor modern imitations, even in plastic I am sorry to say. There are little model trees made out of semi-precious stones, with little clusters of blossoms made out of semi-precious stones. So the Chinese and Japanese too, were quite alive to that type of art. I think that the kind of art that you are thinking of is distinctively a product of the Zen tradition. It's a different way of looking at things. It's not necessarily more or less profound, perhaps it does appeal to a different type of temperament. But I must say that I personally prefer the more, as it were literal, representations of the Pure Land, with all the jewel trees and singing birds and gold and silver ornaments, and all that kind of thing. Not that I don't appreciate the other, but it seems a bit tame, a bit over subtle, a bit over refined. But that may not be everybody's experience. The more literal, as I have called them, representations of the Pure Land seem to have a more - for want of a better term - archetypal quality. Because I think colours, especially jewel like colours, or even actual jewels, do have a certain, I won't say symbolical but sort of psychological and spiritual significance of their own. They do seem able to give you some intimation of those higher, as it were archetypal, levels of existence. It's doubtful whether the more, apparently naturalistic, type of Japanese and Chinese art, is able to do that. You could say that that type of art tries to penetrate beyond the archetypal into the level or the sphere of reality itself. I think it can probably sometimes do that, but only in the hands of a very great artist indeed, who is also a Zen Master, let us say, otherwise it all falls rather flat and you have just got a picture, of a nice little tree by a nice little stream, with a nice little monk sitting underneath it, on a nice little rock; and that's all. Do you see what I mean (V: Yes) So I think that type of art is much more hit or miss, and I think more often than not it misses rather

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than hits. But I certainly wouldn't deny that sometimes it does hit.

Dhammarati: Does that say anything about the general levels about of religious experience that forms these traditions?

S: I think here I am just speaking off the cuff and wild~ly generalising, but I would say, what I have called the type of art that represents the Pure Land quite literally, aims generally speaking at the archetypal plane, and the other, what I call the more naturalistic, or apparently naturalistic, aims I believe in principle at the transcendental plane - but usually doesn't reach it, and therefore falls below the archetypal plane. This is just what occurs to me at the moment of speaking.

Tejananda: Now a question from Ratnaguna about the prediction of Purna's Enlightenment.

Ratnaguna: In the lecture, Bhante, you said that Purna was predicted by Shakyamuni Buddha to become a Buddha in the future, whose Buddha land would be this world. I was just looking through the sutra this evening and he doesn't a~osathat.

S: What does he appear to say?

Ratnaguna: '...also in the future he will go and help to proclaim the law of incalculable, infinite Buddhas, instructing and benefitting enumerable living beings to cause them to achieve Perfect Enlightenment. For the sake of purifying his Buddha land he will ever diligently and zealously instruct the living.' It doesn't say which Buddha land.

S: I could have either read that as this Buddha land, or there may be another translation where it actually says this. So it could either be a slip on my part or a slip, if it is a slip, on the part of the part of some other translator. I suspect there may be a little confusion, either in my mind or in somebody else's between 'his' and 'this'.

Ratnaguna: Before I read that I had a question, if I could ask it anyway. Is there any significance in the fact that it's Purna, who is known for his eloquence, who will be the Buddha of this world once it is purified. i.e. do you think the sutra might be saying that what this world needs more than anything else are people who are eloquent in the teaching of the Dharma?

S: This reminds me of something that I was reading only today, or yesterday, because I am writing this book on Ambedkar and Buddhism, and in this connection Ambedkar made an interesting remark. He was speaking about why a religion declines, and he made three points, he said 'A religion declines, 1. if it doesn't have' (I may be paraphrasing a bit here) 'if it doesn't have', I think he said 'eternal principles', but I think he meant universally valid principles, in other words that it was a universal religion. That was point one. Also, point three was 'it declined if it didn't have simple principles', that is to say principles that were straightforward and could be put across without too much difficulty to a lot of people. Then

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he said 'a religion declined if it didn't have eloquent and capable preachers'. Because, you principles may be as universally valid as you like, they may be as simple as you like, but you still need human beings to put them across. No doubt one mustn't take the word eloquent too literally, eloquent means being able to communicate effectively, whether with flowery language or simple language. unless you have preachers, that is living human beings who can communicate in that way, whether personally or through the books that they write, your universally valid principles, or your simple principles, they are just not going to get across, and the religion will decline or perhaps not even get started at all. So I think eloquence will be needed in any world, certainly in any world in any way resembling our own, in which the Dharma was being propagated. Of course there are other worlds where the Dharma is communicated through beautiful odours, leaving those sorts of worlds aside.

Dhammarati: (            ?            )

S: So to speak, yes. (laughter)

Tejananda: Dhammarati had a question on absolute and concrete universals.

Dhammarati: Again, in the lecture, Bhante, you talk about OM as the abstract universal, HUM as the concrete universal and the jewel in the lotus showing how the abstract becomes concrete. We didn't have time to discuss it in detail in our group and I don't understand it. Could you say more?

S: You mean the difference between the abstract universal and the concrete universal?

Dhammarati: As to the whole sequence, how OM is the abstract, HUM is the concrete, and the jewel in the lotus is the process of the abstract becoming the concrete.

S: Well an abstract universal is a universal which is a concept without any definite content. Whereas a concrete universal is a universal which is not separable from its various particular instances, and which inheres in them and expresses itself through them. These are terms of Hegelian philosophy, which have passed into general currency to some extent. Perhaps I can approach it from a slightly different angle. For instance, take the concept of impermanence. To begin with, to us, it is just an abstract universal. We accept it, it is just a theoretical acceptance, but we haven't yet embodied it in our lives. So the more concrete that particular universal becomes the more we actually do embody it in all the different activities of our life. So we fill that concept, that concept of impermanence, so far as we are concerned, with a greater and greater degree of content, because it is actually finding expression in our lives, our realization of that concept is being transformed, we might say, from the purely intellectual understanding, into something which we understand through our actual experience of it.

Dhammarati: So the concrete expression of it would be the fact that we decay, with the fact that our behaviour consciously is in accord with that.

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S: Yes, and that would show that we understood it, and it therefore was for us no longer an abstract universal, but a concrete universal. This is not quite the same thing, it is somewhat analogous, I am trying to explain the difference between an abstract universal and a concrete universal by means of that quasi-analogy.

Dhammarati: So would the image of the jewel in the lotus fit into that analogy?

S: Yes, because the OM represents, as it were, everything spiritual conceived of just as a



concept, but not yet filled with content. And within the context of this particular mantra, this particular explanation of this particular mantra, you start off with a general idea of .the spiritual life, in a way a general experience, perhaps, of it, but it is rather abstract, it is not as yet embodied in your life, intellect has not become insight. So the process whereby that intellectual understanding, which is, by definition, an understanding of the abstract universal, gradually is transformed into a concrete universal, that is to say into a natural experience of something which, before, you only understood theoretically. Again, don't take it too literally. Not that OM just represents an intellectual understanding; it is that type of transition, the mantra represents that type of transition, that type of transformation. Do you see what I mean? (V: Yes) It is really a transformation of, you could say using Buddhist terms, of vijñana into jñana, or vijñana into prajna.

Abhaya: Bhante, to clarify that, a process whereby the intellectual understanding is gradually transformed into the concrete universal, is that the OM MANE, and then you have HUM when that happened.

S: Ahh. I was just at that moment thinking more in terms of OM AH HUNG than I was of OM MANE PADME HUNG, but the same general principle holds good. Govinda has explained this in great detail from this point of view, more or less, in the Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism. You could say that MANE PADME, MANE is the jewel, it is also the seed, and PADME is the lotus, with the various successive stages of unfolding. So these two, between them, really represent the path, which is a process of the unfolding of potentiality with the result of which abstract understanding is transformed into concrete realization. So here the MANE PADME corresponds with the AH in the other mantra.

V: Do you think it also ties up with the Three levels of wisdom, sutta maya (pr&j~? ) representing...?

S: Yes, indeed, because what you merely hear, what you merely Vearn and you know in the ordinary abstract way is quite different from prajna, which is the matter of actual insight and realization, and the chint~maya prajna is the intermediate stage, the stage of reflection and the turning over in one's own mind, gradually incorporating the knowledge and understanding, making it one's own, making it part of one's own being, whether through meditation or in any other way.

V: It's interesting that it'schintamaya prajna and Chintamani, is there any connection?

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S: Well it is thought, chinta~~ani is the mind jewel, the wish ~Wifilling jewel, as we also so.

Virananda: This is slightly away from the topic but something I have often wanted to clear up. Why, when you quote the passage from Buddhagosa in the Survey of Buddhism, does

he list the chinta maya panna before the sutta maya panna - as you quote it?

S: He might have, but I don't think he should. In the Pali Canon, to the best of my recollection, sutta maya panna always comes first, that would seem to be the logical order. Sometimes there are anomalies, and very often those anomalies have a definite reason. But I don't recollect any passage where Buddhagosa quotes these three in an unorthodox order, so to speak, but if he does there is probably an explanation. In a way it doesn't seem to make sense, if one takes it literally, how can you start thinking about something that you haven't yet learned.

Virananda: I tried to think about that and I thought that maybe it is an intuitive understanding that one has before even hearing the scriptures, rather like the understanding of an illiterate Hui Neng (before he hears?) the Vajracchedika.

S: But did he understand it before he heard it? (Laughter) Because the hearing of it that sparked off the understanding, but even if the understanding follows instantaneously the hearing, none the less, precedes the understanding. Or you might even, as it were, have to conduct a sort of dialogue in your own mind. For instance, you think 'such and such', for instance you think 'the leaves of that tree have fallen', then you start reflecting upon that. Do you see what I mean? So you can conduct a dialogue within yourself, the first part of the dialogue represents the sutta maya panna, you hear what you yourself, as it were, said to yourself, and then the next stage is that you start reflecting upon it more deeply. We all experience, surely, don't we? When we are on our own we, as it were, say something to ourselves, and then we start reflecting on it more deeply. So I don't think you can get away from this particular sequence, not in principle. So I rather wonder what Buddhagosa was about when he, apparently, at least once, enumerated the three in a different order. If he did I am sure there was some good reason, it would be quite interesting to see the particular passage. If I myself have ever enumerated the three in that unusual order it must have been a slip of the pen, I would think, (muddling?) them up.

Cittapala: Bhante, to go back to the mantras. How much time should we spend reflecting on symbols inbetween the OM and the HUM. I have quite often wondered about that in respect of...

S: What do you mean by reflecting?

Cittapala: Well, thinking about them I suppose. I was going to illustrate in terms of the Manjugosa mantra, OM A RA PA CA NA DHIH, I was wondering about that middle section, A RA PA CA NA.

S: The fact that the middle section represents the process of transformation doesn't mean that the process of transformation

consists only in reflecting on that middle section. It can include reflecting on the whole mantra.

Cittapala: But in respect of that mantra, and I suppose probably other ones too, although I haven't thought about the other ones particularly, the meaning, or the obvious meaning is not that clear, if you see what I mean.

S: Well in the case of the OM A RA PA CA NA DHIH the meaning in this particular connection is quite clear. Well OM means what it means in other mantras in this connection, so to speak the abstract universal, the DHIH represents the end product, its wisdom, dhih means wisdom, insight, knowledge - so that represents the concrete universal. But what about the A RA PA CA NA, this I have explained, especially I think in a seminar I gave on the Manjugosha sadhana some years ago, this is the so called alphabet of wisdom. The idea derives from one of the Perfection of Wisdom sutras. The relevant extract is included in Conze's 5 Buddhist Wisdom books. The idea is that wisdom has so many different attributes and each attribute has a name in Sanskrit, so you can take not the name but the initial syllable, I said syllable not letter because in the Devanagari there is a vowel inherent in every consonant, so one speaks in terms of syllables not letters. So one takes the initial syllable of the name describing each attribute, and this gives you, so to speak, a letter of an alphabet. Just as you have got a for animal, b for bear, c for cat - do you see what I mean? You have got a for anirvacannia you've ra for - let's say raja, pa for pammodinna and so on. So in that way you make up an alphabet, each letter of which is the initial letter or an initial syllable of an attribute of the perfection of wisdom. When the Sanskrit alphabet is enumerated the letters or syllables are always enumerated in fives, so the A RA PA CA NA is as it were, the first set of five of all the possible letters or syllables of the perfection of wisdom alphabet. So the idea is in order to pass from the OM to the DHIH you have to explore all the different aspects of prajna as expressed by all these different letters of the so called alphabet of wisdom. Because all these different terms for Prajna Pramita represent so many aspects of reality, so many different forms of insight, all of which have to be explored and experienced before you can arrive at the DHIH, which represents full enlightenment.

Cittapala: So for people who are practicing that sadhana, are you suggesting that we actually have to explore each one of those

S: Again, don't take it literally. It means you have to explore all the different aspects of wisdom, you can do that in a methodical way in accordance with the teachings of the Abhisamayalankara, or you can do it in a less systematic way especially by reading and reflecting on, and meditating on, the perfection of wisdom sutras in general, which in an unsystematic form do explore different dimensions, maybe dimensions is a better word here, of prajna, of sunyata. Do you see what I mean?

Cittapala: Would it be over simplistic to equate each one of those syllables with a different aspect of one of the Five Jinas and their associated wisdoms?

S: I don't know whether there is a direct connection made, but there could be, because each of those Jinas is associated with a jnana, and jnana is roughly synonymous with prajna, so it must be possible to work out some system of correspondences. Not necessarily one to one but there must be some interconnection between them. And you could, as it were, imagine yourself going round the circle of the five wisdoms and that would take you from OM to DHIH, because those five wisdoms are meant to be exhaustive. There is one slight anomaly because the central wisdom is supposed to represent the integration of the other four, so really the central wisdom should correspond to the DHIH, but I am sure there is a way round that, as it were.

Tejananda: The next one is from Padmavajra and is about mantra as primal sound.

Padmavajra: ( ?

S: There is something about that in, or there will be something about that in the re-edited of the Mitrata Omnibus. There is a quite lengthy extract which I had forgotten all about from an early lecture of mine, on OM as the primordial sound. That will be out in a couple of months.

Tejananda: So Virananda.

Suvajra: Tejananda maybe I should come in with my.. question, here because it follows on directly from what we were speaking about. (T: O.K.) It is still on the same topic of the OM and the HUM. I was thinking about the AH also, in the correspondence of OM AH HUM. I wondered if the fact that AH is often associated with speech could indicate that after Enlightenment can be formulated completely in terms of communication. And is that concept of communication capable of being stretched so far?

S: Also, of course, I have spoken in the Eightfold Path Treatises, of the throat centre as linking the head centre and the heart centre. One could look at it in that way too, yes. One could say that one passes from the more abstract realization of the head to the more concrete realization of the heart, through communication.

Suvajra: Do you think the whole of the path to Enlightenment could be formulated in terms of communication?

S: I expect it could, but again one has to be quite careful that one doesn't go to extremes. One would have to be careful that one did actually formulate all the stages of the path in those particular terms and not leave out any stages. But I suspect it could be that, one could only try.

Tejananda: So now Virananda on mantra and Buddhist tradition.

Virananda: Are the mantric syllables OM and HUM pre-Buddhistic?

S: OM certainly is. I don't remember encountering HUM in pre-Buddhistic speech. OM often seems to have been used in pre-Buddhistic times as an expression of affirmation, rather

'amen', and seems to have gradually acquired other connotations.

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But I don't recollect HUM; but I won't be sure about that, so don't quote me-as saying that there was no HUM before the Buddha, but that may well be the case. SVAHA is definitely pre-Buddhistic, that is found in the Vedas.

Virananda: And are there any other mantric syllables which are used in the Bodhisattva mantras which are pre-Buddhistic?

S: DHIH is pre-Buddhistic, but it isn't used as a mantra, Tho the best of my knowledge, it is just a word which means wisdom. Some scholars have said, well at least one scholar has said that DHIH, in the Vedic context, and perhaps early Buddhist context, means something more like inspiration than wisdom. In Pali there is a word dhihma meaning the wise man, you find it in the Dhammapada; sage.

Virananda: Secondly, have the Buddhist mantras incorporated magic sound symbols from other traditions?

S: It does seem that in medieval times in India, that is to say, lets say the 3rd - 11th centuries of the Christian era in India there was a sort of twilight zone which was not exactly Hindu and not exactly Buddhist, and there were lots of mantras current in that zone, so to speak. Mantras used in connection with the worship of somewhat ethnic divinities, and used for, perhaps more or less mundane purposes, arid mundane magical purposes. And some of these were definitely taken over by the Buddhists and sort of spiritualised, or semi-spiritualised. You do find a lot of these mantras and their associated visualizations in the Buddhist tantras, some of the Buddhist tantras, especially in Tibet. So no doubt Buddhism took over a lot of material. It isn't quite correct to say from Hinduism, because Hinduism in the modern sense hardly existed in those days, but they took over all sorts of beliefs, practices, modes of expression, imagery, from the Indian ethnic religion and cults and traditions, and from the folk law. Its rather as though, Christianity, on coming to the West from Palastine had incorporated the Greek and Roman gods and goddesses, and village sprites and so on. In a sense sometimes it did but they were heavily disguised as Christian saints, some of whom, many who are quite mythological. Some of them even had the names of pagan gods, just with Saint put before them. I think there is St. Dionysius and so on and so forth.

Virananda: Thirdly. With the Buddhist mantras is it possible to trace a historical development with them?

S: I doubt it very much in the sense that I doubt very much That we have the information, the materials to do that. Except possibly in the case of the best known mantras. We might be able to do it with regard to OM MANE PADME HUM, possibly even the Tara mantra, but there are lots and lots of mantras which I think we would find it very difficult to trace and ( ? Don't forget that Indian history, including religious history is very poorly documented

indeed.

V: We had a discussion in our group about, just how is it that mantras can spark off a particular quality. Is it because they just accrue around them a number of associations, or is there something in the mantra itself, or

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is it impossible to say?

S: It's possibly impossible to say, though perhaps one should observe oneself and try to actually see what happens when one recites a mantra, especially when you recite a mantra that you haven't, perhaps, recited before. But it is true that each mantra has a very special, really almost indefinable quality which is distinctive and quite recognisable. I think you become more aware of it the more often you recite the particular mantra.

Tejananda: Now Cittapala has a question on mantra chanting.

Cittapala: We were talking about mantras and I was wondering if you feel there would be any merit in introducing mantra recitation, for instance the Avalokitesvara mantra as a regular samatha meditation practice alongside the Mindfulness of Breathing and Metta Bhavana for Mitras and for regular Friends?

S: Well we do have it in the context of the puja, the Sevenfold Puja.

Cittapala: Yes, but I was suggesting as a regular samatha practice.

S: I am a bit doubtful about that, because people are always wanting to pass onto something more, something different, sometimes just because other people, say in this case Order Members, do it, so why shouldn't they do it. Sometimes there is a pseudo-egalitarian idea at the back of their minds. On the other hand there are sometimes people, some Mitras, who have a genuine feeling for mantras and like to recite them. So I just really don't know, I can't be sure about this. I am very hesitant to introduce something to the general practice before people are in a sense are really ready for it, or before they are in a position, really, to appreciate its significance. I think one would probably have to play this by ear, I don't like to lay down any hard and fast rule that no one shouldn't do that. I would say that if one did do it one would have to be quite careful about it and do it in a proper situation. Supposing you had a small group of Mitras on retreat with you and a very good atmosphere built up, and they were all quite serious, and you felt it would be good not only to chant the Avalokitesvara mantra in the context of the Puja but have a whole session for that. Under those circumstances I would say that it probably would be all right and I would be happy to leave it to the judgement and discretion of the Order Member leading that particular retreat. But not to introduce it as a general practice at all centres that you always got Mitras doing that.

Mitras would be alright, but you would have to bear in mind that with regard to non- Mitras the mantra would have a definite religious significance that the Mindfulness and the Metta Bhavana wouldn't have. So to introduce the mantra is definitely to introduce a religious dimension, which is alright in the case of Mitras but which might not be acceptable to all Friends. So it shouldn't be sprung on them, because they might possibly react, as some do to the Puja or would do if it was sprung on them without warning, as it were.

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Cittapala: I suppose my question sprang out of another consideration. ( ? ) I think its the thirty seven places of work, in the Theravada tradition.

S: Do you mean the kamadhammas , the fo~rty kamadhammas?

Cittapala: Yes, forty. I was wondering whether for some people such things as learning to concentrate on coloured discs, which you mentioned earlier in the week.

S: Because that again is, as it were, neutral, you can take Th just as an exercise. But a mantra introduces a specifically religious and devotional element. So in any case that should be confined to Mitras, but even there one should proceed with caution. I don't think one can put the mantra in the same category as the Metta Bhavana and the Mindfulness of Breathing, just because of its richer associations, more specifically devotional associations.

V: Another question ( ? That perhaps the Sabbe Satta Sukhi Hontu would be more in keeping as a samatha practice for non Order Members.

S: That's true, one could certainly try that. It has Ween introduced at least for short periods here and there in the movement. Or even the Namomassa, but that is specifically a religious salutation to the Buddha, whereas the Sabbe satta sukhi hontu is of general significance, has a humanistic sentiment even.

(end of tape 13)

Tejananda: Dhammarati now has a question on Mitras doing visualizations.

Dhammarati: I believe there are Mitras at the LBC who have had an O.K. from you to do visualization and there is at least one other Mitra I wondered if it would be useful if they did a visualization practice. I wondered what the situation was. Should Mitras be encouraged to wait until they are ordained?

S: Yes, I say definitely encourage to wait until~they are ordained. If they are as serious as that they ought to be asking for ordination, otherwise it just means that they are just taking it as something extra, wanting to play with it perhaps without committing themselves, and one

doesn't encourage that. But yes, I have recognized in two or three cases that even though somebody is a Mitra he is very serious and could do a visualization practice, a simple one, and benefit from that. But I usually tell such people to keep it quiet, otherwise other Mitras say, 'He's been given one, why shouldn't I be given one.' Almost as though 'He's got a sweetie why can't I be given a sweetie', it's a bit like that. But certainly if there is an exceptional case then consideration can be given them, but I would rather know about it personally and decide personally. That also lets you off the hook as the Order Member, because otherwise if it is known that you have allowed somebody to do a visualization practice, well others will ask you and that could be difficult.

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But if you can always say 'You just have to ask Bhante', well that lets you off the hook, you see, and the matter is dealt with otherwise.

Tejamitra: On that subject, Bhante, would you still, now, describe a visualization like you did in this lecture. Because couldn't people generally take up that practice as you described it in the lecture.

S: Yes, possibly. I think in the days that I did occasionally describe these things people didn't think in terms of doing such practices. Nowadays they might. So perhaps I wouldn't do that, in any case, I think, think this way of ending a lecture, started by me, has subsequently been rather over-worked. I would now conclude by describing the image of ... ? ? I must say, while I am on the subject, that some of those early lectures of mine there was a very, very good atmosphere. I can remember some of those occasions very well indeed, they used to be at Centre House in the very early days of the Movement, and it certainly didn't seem inappropriate to speak in that sort of way at that time. People respond to that sort of material very enthusiastically, but they didn't actually think in terms of trying to visualize them themselves. They just took it as inspirational in a general way.

Tejananda: Still continuing with a similar theme, Mahamati has a question about Mitras taking the Ten Precepts.

Mahamati: This relates, Bhante, to an occasion when a Mitra read the Ten Pillars of Buddhism, and had been very inspired by it, and told me that when on his own or with just one other Order Member, prefer to recite the Refuges and the Ten Precepts. I personally discouraged him to do that. The question is was I correct?

S: Well you certainly weren't wrong, because in the first place you didn't know, and you would be setting a precedent, so you behaved cautiously, which is correct, even though it might have been a good idea for that particular person to do that. So you have to be careful that you don't set a precedent in the wrong sort of way. But in principle that one could argue that we let people recite the Three Refuges and the Five Precepts in the context of the Sevenfold Puja, why not the Ten Precepts. We can't ignore the fact that we are part of the wider Buddhist movement and in that wider Buddhist movement the Three Refuges and Five



Precepts are recited by all and sundry, with varying degrees of seriousness. But we have made a distinction between those who really are committed and those who are not by confining the Ten Precepts to the actually committed, that is Order Members. So therefore, I would say as a general rule that only Order Members should recite these things, certainly in public. Do you see what I mean? If an individual Mitra likes to recite the Ten Precepts in the privacy of his own room, during his own Puja, well that is up to him or her. As to doing it with an Order Member, it is in a sense placing the Mitra on a par with the Order Member. One has to be careful that the ordinary Mitra wasn't taking that in the wrong sort of way. But if someone is as serious as that, well certainly they mustn't be discouraged from practicing the Ten Precepts, but I think apart from reciting

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the Ten Precepts by themselves, it should be made clear to them that these Ten Precepts go along with actual formal commitment. So if you feel really very strongly about the Ten Precepts, perhaps it's time you asked for ordination. It is much the same as with the mantras.

Because, if someone wants to do what, according to our tradition, is distinctive to the Order Member, it should mean that they are thinking in terms of becoming an Order Member. Otherwise someone might come and say, 'Can't I wear a kesa sometimes, can't I wear a kesa when I do~y Puja', do you see what I mean? 'This would help me, this would make me feel more in touch', they might argue like that. Do you see what I mean? So I think, however sincere some Mitras may be one doesn't want to make an unreal distinction of any kind, but at the same time I think one has to insist that Mitras don't do those things that are distinctive to Order Members without being Order Members. In the past, years ago, it doesn't happen now, Mitras have even argued that they ought to be allowed to attend Order meetings. You must make some distinction, even though there may be a little overlapping spiritually between the committed person and the non-committed person.

Mahamati: In the case of this Mitra, he hadn't actually asked for ordination. So I think in actually suggesting that he didn't take the Ten Precepts it would cause him to think more fully about the implications of taking the Ten Precepts. (S: Yes indeed) And perhaps he should be thinking about asking for ordination.

S: Yes, right. It's not that you are discouraging someone from practicing those precepts, but taking them, as it were openly, verbally, does suggest a definite commitment, and that commitment is tantamount to ordination. So he should ask himself whether he isn't taking those things too lightly. Or if he isn't, well it should be put to him whether he ought not to think of asking for ordination.

Tejananda: Ratnaguna on how to approach the final part of the talk, which we have already mentioned, with the Mitras in study groups.

Ratnaguna: It's basically the thing that Tejamitra mentioned. At the end of the lecture ou

describe in outline at least the Avalokitesvara sadhana. In that you have advised Order Members not to discuss their sadhana with anyone who doesn't also do the practice, I wonder how we should deal with questions that Mitras may ask about the practice.

S: Well I think with regard to the image of Avalokitesvara one could say that the description of the image is just like looking at a picture. It is not intended as an initiation or anything like that, it is just a conjuring up of an inspiring image and people should take it in that sort of way.

Ratnaguna: But you outlined the actual sadhana, not just the image, and a couple of Order Members have already asked me today, 'What happens there', and so on, and I have wondered whether to actually tell them. Do you see what I mean, whether to actually ...

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S: I think it is enough to say that he did just give a little detail there to fill out the picture, as it were. It wasn't his intention that anyone hearing the talk should be able to start doing the practice, that is a quite different thing. So if one is interested in taking up the sadhana, as an Order Member, well fair enough, but if it isn't your regular practice just go and talk to Bhante about it. If it is a Mitra, well say that the description is just for inspirational purposes and if you are very much drawn to that sort of practice, well maybe that does suggest that you should be thinking of asking for ordination.

Ratnaguna: So don't go into too much detail.

S: No. There is no need to go into any more detail than I have gone in the talk itself.

Tejananda: Now Padmavajra has a question on Order Members taking new visualization practices.

Padmavajra: We were discussing ( ) ? I understand that recently you have spoken of there being in the Order only one Tantric initiation. Does this mean that we are completely free to take up any visualization practice, should we check with you first before we take up further practices?

S: The short answer is just check with me. There is a lot that could be said but I think we need to get through all the questions. And I have touched on these matters on other occasions. But the short answer is - if you want to take up an additional practice, check with me.

Tejananda: Susiddhi has a question on the Padmasambhava mantra.

Susiddhi: When we do the Sevenfold Pula the padmasambhava mantra is chanted

between the transference of merit and self- surrender, and the concluding mantras. Why the Padmasambhava mantra and why at that point in the Puja?

S: As far as I can recollect, we started this in the Archway -days, it was simply that it seemed appropriate. Avalokitesvara is the best known Bodhisattva, the most accessible one, one might say, the one who is known to anybody, if they know any Bodhisattvas they know Avalokitesvara. The mantra is very common indeed, is recited by all sorts of people. So there is no harm, so to speak, in incorporating that into a puja. We had already chanting that mantra at the beginning, so if one chanted a second mantra it would seem to be appropriate to have that towards the end. And Padmasambhava, again is a relatively well known figure. And in Tibet, especially, the mantra is a very common one, everybody knows it. Also there is the association of Padmasambhava with energy, and even at that time a lot of people in the FWBO had a special feeling for Padmasambhava, for one reason or another, and therefore we included his mantra at that particular point. To the best of my knowledge, as far as I recollect, it was position that it was put simply because simply having that mantra at the end balanced the other mantra at the beginning. It seemed to work quite well. It somehow seemed like a concluding mantra, a concluding mantra in the sense of a

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mantra which is chanted for some minutes towards the end of the Puja.

Tejananda: Suvajra has a question on the visualization of oneself as the guru or Bodhisattva or the Bodhisattva outside one.

Suvajra: In this particular lecture you described the visualization of yourself as Avalokitesvara and any of our practices are self-visualization practices, but others are visualizations of Buddhas or Bodhisattvas outside. In the Tantric tradition there is a distinction between self visualization and visualization external (S: Right), although we are not following an orthodox Tantric path, is there anything in that distinction that we should take into account when we take up visualization practice?

S: Yes, the broad principle that one should bear in mind is That, inasmuch as one's experience is bifurcated into a subject and an object one is operating within the limits of that bifurcation, any spiritual practice that one does is within those limits, conditioned by those limits. So if you visualize, say, Avalokitesvara, if you visualize him as out there, that is only half the truth - or not even half the truth. You have also got to visualize him in here, you have got to visualize the subject as Avalokitesvara as well as the object, and eventually you have got to be able to bring the two together. So whether you start with the subjective pole and try to transform that, or the objective pole and try to transform that, one could say it is a matter of temperament, or perhaps it is just a question of the particular kind of practice that was available, or the practice that your teacher thought was best for you. But there is a subject in your experience, that subject has to be transformed into Avalokitesvara, there is an

object in your experience, in a sense objectivity in general, so that object has to be transformed. Hence the visualization, so to speak, of oneself as Avalokitesvara, and/or the visualization of Avalokitesvara out there as an objective deity, so to speak. So when visualizing Avalokitesvara out there you must remember that he is also in here, and it is Avalokitesvara visualizing Avalokitesvara, and when visualizing in here one has to remember that he is also out there. This is a basic principle, a basic point to bear in mind.

~ra: With that basic point borne in mind, Tsong-kha-pa and other writers said that self visualization should always be undertaken first, before visualization externally.

S: I am not sure of the reasoning there, because it would seem to me that visualization out there is easier. For instance also when you visualize the elements, the yellow square and so on, well, visualize out there - it is more difficult to visualize in here. I would have to look at what he actually said, and why, and in what context, I would have to look carefully before I could say anything more. The Gelugpas regard Tsong-kha-pa as the primary authority on these matters, but I think that authority is not completely beyond question.

Suvajra: ( ? ) from the Cult of Tara, I can't remember exactly how Tsong-kha-pa would say, but it was the distinction between, that visualizing outside gave you power over directing the Buddha and

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Bodhisattva, but you couldn't have that power unless you first cultivated that internally.

S: This is of course true, with respects to power, but whether Th ties up quite in that way with those two different kinds of visualization, that is another matter. Because you could argue, how can you have spiritual power, transcendental power, unless you have gone beyond the duality of subject and object. So how can the source of that power be here any more than it is there, in the subject any more than it is in the object - strictly speaking. There are many looking at, many ways of understanding or interpreting this very complex business of the self-production and the infront production, as it is called. I have reduced the matter to what seemed to me the bare essentials and the fundamental principles. I think this is what it is really all about, is transformation of object and transformation of subject. I think this question of magical transformation, or exercise of magical power, or magically controlling the object, which Bayer does go into in that book, is perhaps a bit of a side track.

Dharimadhara: I went along to a seminar on the Medicine Buddha, and the Tibetan chap, Lobsang Rabgay was explaining the practice, and he said he would explain it in terms of the frontal visualization, because that didn't need any initiation, whereas if it was a self-visualization it would need an initiation. Is that a particular traditional viewpoint and could you comment in general.

S: I am not sure what he meant by initiation, or could have meant. Whether it was 'gonkur' or something less than 'wonkur' and even of 'wonkurs' there are several kinds. So the word 'initiation' doesn't convey all that much. It might have been, this is only guess work, but it might have been thinking basically in terms of the fact that in the Mahayana sutras, in Mahayana Buddhism generally, there are figures of Buddhas and Bodhisattva described and these can be visualized without any Tantric initiation, as in the case of the meditations of the Amitayudhyana Sutra, there are quite complex but they are Mahayanistic not Vajrayanic, require no Tantric initiation. But when you come onto the Tantras there is this question of self production and in front production. Since in front production, in a manner of speaking, is already in the Mahayana sutras, and can be practiced without a Tantric initiation, therefore, one could argue that that only leaves the self production to be the subject of the Tantric initiation. But this is perhaps a little sophisticated, shall we say. But the whole question is very, very complex. It is very difficult to say, really, anything about it. This whole question of the in front production and the self production is one of the most complex questions in the whole field of the Vajrayana, there are so many different ways of looking at it, so many different interpretations, not all of which are consistent, it seems. And probably there are all sorts of separate traditions somehow being welded together in Tibet, and perhaps not always, by the very nature of the material, welded together completely successfully.

Padmavajra: Would the graded ..., the idea that the Tantra is graded between Kria, Jarya, Yoga etc. Is that a

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movement from, generation out through ....

S: I don't think it can be simplified in that sort of way, no I don't think it does, I don't think it can be.

Dharinadhara: So it is possible to do a self visualization without a (wonkur), presumably, or an initiation.

S: Well it depends what one means by 'possible to do'. 7 ?

Dharmadhara: Traditionally accepted.

S: Within the context of Tibetan tradition, as at present it exists, it would not be acceptable. This is a very big subject, perhaps we need to go into some other time. But note my careful qualification. Anyway, last question.

Tejananda: Kulamitra - retaining identification with oneself as Buddha or Bodhisattva after the practice.

S: Ahh, I think I have answered this question before, but anyway ask it anyway. (Laughter) But yes I have actually answered it before.

Kulamitra: That certainly is pre-judgement!

S: Well the question as put by Tejananda.

Kulamitra: The question is, could it be merely fancy if you try and maintain a view of yourself as a visualized deity after the end of the practice. For instance, I have heard of someone practicing with a Tibetan teacher, who were trying to imagine themselves as Sakyamuni Buddha even while they were eating and dedicating the food to all living beings, rather than just being mindful of their experience at the time.

S: Say that again, the first part about the fanciful bit.

Kulamitra: Could it be merely fancy if you try and maintain a view of yourself as a visualized deity after the end of the practice?

S: Could it be merely fancy, well obviously it could be, that possibility always exists. Because if you aren't the deity, you haven't transformed yourself into the deity it must be fancy, if you think you are, but you aren't. But that doesn't mean you can't validly go through a practice without having actually as yet realized the content of that practice. You can sort of think of yourself as a deity, whether it is advisable or not, which would be according to circumstances; you can validly think of yourself as the deity and try to behave as though you actually were the deity without actually being the deity, just as an aspect of your sadhana. I don't think the assumption is that you should only think of yourself as the deity, or as Sakyamuni after meditation, when moving about the world, if you have actually realized that in meditation. Do you see what I mean? (K Yes I do) But I think unless one is in very propitious circumstances it isn't advisable to continue the practice in that way, it sets up too great a strain and tension between what

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you are trying to do and the circumstances in which you find yourself.

Kulamitra: I suppose I was also thinking, you commented on the need for more mindfulness, even amongst the Order, and I suppose I thought if people aren't even mindful in an ordinary way, isn't it rather beyond them start imagining greater spiritual...

S: That's true but then of course some people might claim that Thinking of themselves as Sakyamuni helped them to be more mindful. They could argue in that way. Whether they actually were or not, whether that worked would have to be observed in their actual practice.

But certainly, this is something I don't mind repeating, there is a great need for more mindfulness, even of the part of Order Members, in the affairs of everyday life, or in connection with the Movement itself, chapter meetings, Pujas and all sorts of things.

V: I think one of my questions has been left out, one on Avalokitesvara and In a chapter in Avalokitesvara, in the sutra, there is an episode where the Bodhisattva offers Avalokitesvara his pearl necklace, Avalokitesvara will not accept it and °Aksh amati aain offers the necklace, asking that Avalokitesvara accepts it out of compassion for the assembly. The Buddha then asks Avalokitesvara to accept the necklace, and he does, dividing it into two parts, giving one part to Sakyamuni and one part to Abundant Treasures. Have you any ideas about the significance of this episode, if it does have an ?

S: I think I need to reflect on this more. Though, as by coincidence, only this afternoon I read a little article in an Eastern Buddhist magazine which was about Avalokitesvara, or Kwan-Yin , as they call him there, it referred to the three great events in the life of Kwan-Yin which were celebrated in Chinese Buddhism. One being Avalokitesvara' 5 birth from a ray of light sent forth by Amitabha, the other being his delaying of his own Nirvana, his own attainment of Buddhahood, which he could have attained before Sakyamuni, but postponing it to remain in Bodhisattva form for an even longer period. The other incident was the instance of the pearl necklace, so clearly it is considered very important. But I haven't, I must admit, given any thought to it as yet, so I wouldn't like just to hazard a guess, I think it is something to be reflected upon and clearly there is some significance. Traditional Chinese Buddhism has ranked that incident with the Birth and the postponement of Enlightenment, so there must be quite considerable significance attached to it. It is quite poetic.

V: Presumably it would be O.K. for us to interpret as we wish.

S: It would be O.K. for you to reflect on the significance of the incident, but I shouldn't be in a hurry to interpret it. Spend a sufficient time reflecting on it. Some of you are a little tired this evening, have you been having late nights or just lots and lots of study. Anyway there is only one more day, only one more lecture, see what

see what sort of questions we g~t there.

(~jD ~r ThP£ i~)

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Tejananda: Tonight we have got eleven questions on The Archetype of the Divine Healer, starting out with one from me. You mention the very high quality of some of the statues of Asclepios. Can You recall where any of the images which particularly impressed you can be found?

S: I did see some in Greece, and I have seen some in Italy. I can't remember exactly where in Greece or Italy, but I have also seen a number of photographs of such images in books about Ancient Greek and also Greek and Roman art. There are very many such images or statues, he seems to have been one of the most popular divinities, or demigods, perhaps one should say, in ancient times - especially perhaps during the latter period, the Hellenic period, perhaps. We did see one, I think in Naples, but not one that was particularly striking there. I am trying to think which books I saw particularly good pictures in, but I can't remember, I am afraid. But they are quite common, they are not at all uncommon, I think if you got any fairly comprehensive book on Ancient Greek art, Greek and Roman art, Hellenic art, you will be sure to encounter a few specimens. He is very easily recognized, he is always represented as a tall, very dignified, bearded figure, and he is accompanied by a serpent. I think the serpent, very often, twining up a staff which he is carrying.

Tejananda: Do you know of any in this country?

S: I don't, I think. I can't remember seeing any in the British museum. But they are quite common, one does see them in collections of sculptures in both Greece and Italy, and as I said, pictures do feature in all the art books dealing with that kind of art.

Tejananda: The second question is from Prakasha.

Cittapala: Excuse me, can I just ask a question. I was wondering what the significance was of the serpent twining up his staff.

S: I think I mention in the lecture that he was originally identified with the serpent, or was envisaged in serpent form, so no doubt the serpent is himself in that earlier, more primitive form. I am not quite sure why he was envisaged in serpent form, it may have something to do with the fact that the serpent sheds its skin, it sort of recovers, as it were. Primitive man could have, primitive man did see the serpent shedding its skin as a symbol of death and rebirth; you could see it as a symbol of recovery from illness, even. There may be that sort of association, I am not completely sure of this but there must be some connection of that sort.

Asclepius also has, especially in later classical mythology, has a daughter whose name is Hygiea, probably the Greeks pronounce as Hygea - whom we know as hygiene which is perhaps rather interesting. (Pause) Especially in the kitchen! But I think, just to add a little, I think some of the figures of Asclepius that I have seen come nearer to certain images of the standing Buddha than I have seen. Because there is... well he is definitely the divine healer in much the same way that the Buddha is. You get that expression of dignity, knowledge, experience, concern for humanity, those sort of feelings

in the case of the best statues of Asclepius come across very



clearly, very definitely.

Tejananda: Now a question from Prakasha on Paracelsus.

Prakasha: Paracelsus is one of the greatest and most legendary physicians and Alchemists in Western culture. Do you know much about him and would you recommend research into him for those interested in that sort of field?

S: There are many differences about him. He called himself Paracelsus, that wasn't his real name, his real name was (Theophrastus, ?) and he called himself Paracelsus because Paracelsus means greater than Celsus, and Celsus was a famous philosopher and doctor apparently, of ancient times, the one who wrote an attack on Christianity which Oregan refuted. So Paracelsus seemed to have a very high opinion of himself indeed. There is a life of him, or book about him, which I read many many years ago, by Hartman I am not sure whether it was Nicholas Hartman or some other Hartman, Hartman was a Theosophist. The book was published, I think in the eighties of the last century. But I don't know of any other, certainly accessible, life of him, or book about him. I don't know if that has been reprinted but I did read it years ago and it was very interesting. I think there is some difference of opinion among present day authorities as to what extent he was a genuine seeker after truth, a genuine philosopher or experimentalist, or even a genuine doctor, and to what extent he was just a bit of a charlatan. I believe he is sometimes credited although here I am speaking from memory about something I read forty years ago - I believe he is credited with the introduction of metals into the Pharmacopoea. Maybe Dharmadhara would have something to say about this? (D: No) Because metals are sometimes used in some forms of medicine, that is they are taken in, minerals are taken internally.

Dharmadhara: Like iron.

S: Iron, even gold, in powdered form. I think sulphur was used, especially in the treatment of Syphilis, as was mercury. So I believe that he is credited by some authorities as having been the first to introduce mineral substances into the treatment of diseases, but this is just a vague recollection of what I read them. But again, from my general impression of him, he was a somewhat inflated personality, but these are just some recollections of things that I read all those years ago, so if you feel interested investigate yourself, but I don't think there is very much material about him in English. I am even doubtful if any of his works have been published or translated in modern times.

Prakasha: The ( ? ) foundation have published a lot of his work, but it is actually rather expensive, ...

S: But no doubt one can always get them through the library service, and at least have a look at them. I think he would be rather, sort of odd character to take as an exemplar as the archetype of the divine healer. You may find, you probably will find, at least short articles about him in the Encyclopaedia Britannica and so on.

Tejananda: The third question is from Kulamitra, about

healing within the Movement.

Kulamitra: Could the healing arts become a major expression of the compassion of the Movement, as it apparently was for the Cathar Parfaits? What would need to be done to bring people's individual healing skills together as a genuine expression of the Dharma?

S: I think what would need to be done, broadly speaking, is what has already been done in the case of those teaching Yoga, that the practitioners must come together. I don't think one could tell them what they ought to do once they have come together, they would have to sort that out themselves. Assuming that there were at least some committed people in the form of Order Members amongst them, who could give the proper guidance from a spiritual point of view - do you see what I mean? I think yes, certainly the exercise of the art of healing could be an expression of Buddhist compassion, quite definitely. There are some practical, and perhaps theoretical problems and difficulties. I mean there is a multiplicity of different methods of healing, and perhaps one would need to evaluate those to some extent, or those getting together in that way would perhaps have to evaluate them from a spiritual point of view. Presumably they wouldn't encourage reliance on drugs, presumably they would encourage people to take greater responsibility for their own health, their own physical and mental health, instead of living carelessly and then expecting the doctor, or even the 'quack', to patch you up when you got into difficulties so that you could go on living carelessly. Perhaps doctors, genuine doctors, should think of themselves as educators, also. Educating people in the care of their bodies. And clearly you can't separate the physical from the mental, I think this is being increasingly realized by all concerned. So I think while a definitely Buddhist medical service, in the broadest sense, would be possible, there would need to be quite a lot of thinking and discussion among those concerned first and even afterwards. I think also, I have sometimes been a bit concerned about the attitudes within the FWBO, to some extent, towards medical treatment with regards to problems of health. The FWBO, to some extent, or in a way, is a sort of alternative movement, so you could say it's an alternative movement in a positive sense, in a sense suggestive of strength, but it also is sometimes, I suspect, an alternative movement in the weaker sense. That is to say you quite automatically and unthinkingly follow whatever is alternative to or apposed to what the stuffy middle classes are doing. So if society at large relies upon orthodox medicine, let's say allopathy, well of course you, being alternative, won't have much to do with that-unless you get into real difficulties of course and need an operation or something of that sort - you instead rely on or follow, or believe in, or patronize alternative medicine. And while you are very critical, perhaps, of those people who believe in real doctors, your faith in your own favourite 'quack' can be positively blind. Do you see what I mean? So I think we have to discourage those attitudes. The potential patients themselves have to do a bit of sorting out and have a critical attitude, perhaps, or a healthily sceptical attitude towards all medical traditions. I really feel this is quite necessary, because it isn't good to get into the hands of anybody who doesn't really know what he is doing, and I suspect

that in the case of quite a few practitioners of alternative medicine they don't always really know what they are doing. I am sure acupuncturists don't - I know this from my own experience - I don't want to harp on that single experience of mine too much but I think it was indicative of what can happen. Not that I disbelieve in acupuncture, I believe in it in the sense that I believe that there are certain energies which the system of acupuncture is able to affect or interfere with, let us say - and that is a very dangerous business so you really need to know what you are doing. Because in the hands of an unskilful Practitioner it is just throwing a spanner into the works, you Produce some sort of effect, you get results, but what is the value of those results, do they really in the long run contribute to health? A lot of people like to feel that something is happening. And also there is the aspect of going along to someone who seems friendly and sympathetic and can chat to you a bit, and shoot you a line about life and the meaning of life and all that kind of thing. You feel good after going along to them, you don't usually get that sort of service from the ordinary doctor, he usually just grunts and says, 'That'll be ten guineas please'. (Laughter) But do you see what I am getting at? But accidents apart, if we led a sensible life, healthy life we would probably not fall sick so often or need the doctor so often. So therefore I say a real medical man should also be concerned with educating people about the care of themselves so that they didn't need his services very much.

Kulamitra: One of the things that occurred to me Bhante is that it seems that all the healing professions, including the alternative ones, seem to have a strong vested interest in their professional careers and not be very interested in co-operating. And one of the things I thought is that as Buddhists, presumably, we would be in a much better position to take a common sense attitude to them all without the emotional distortions getting in the way of the truth.

S: Though of course one must recognize that in the case of Tlopaths, I believe, that in Britain they are not permitted to co-operate, co-operate professionally, with practitioners of alternative forms of medicine.

Kulamitra: Well that sort of emphasises the point doesn't it.

S: Yes. That is not the case, for instance, in Germany, I believe.

Susiddhi: I think that's true, if the other practitioner isn't a doctor himself, whereas if he was a Homeopathist he would be.

S: If he is a doctor then the co-operation would be with him as a doctor. (S: Yes) I don't know whether things are different in Scotland or whether that applies to the whole of the British Isles.

Susiddhi: It's the same.

Dharmaloka: Do you know whether this educationalist attitude which you suggest was more taken care of by some of the Tibetan medicine, which you call Ayurveda which is -(-signs of life?)

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S: I'm not sure about that. I only have a mere smattering of knowledge about Ayurveda, I have not read any actual Ayurvedic texts. I wouldn't be surprised if they did contain some provisions with regard to ones' daily life and regimen, but I don't know for sure. In India there are two systems mainly, there is the Ayurvedic system, which is indigenous, and then there is what they call the Unani system which is the Islamic version of traditional Greek medicine, which is prevalent throughout the traditional Islamic world. Unani- to the best of my knowledge, is a corruption of Yunani, or Ionian i.e. Greek. In India it is called Unani - the doctor is called, I think, the Hagee. But as regards Tibetan medicine from what I have heard I am a bit sceptical, but I am open to conviction, but I am not sure that Tibetan medicine has found all sorts of wonderful things about the human body and can do all sorts of wonderful things that Western medicine can't do, I am really still quite sceptical about that. Some of our friends, a few of them, have started developing again what I can't help feeling is rather blind faith in Tibetan medicine.

Padmavajra: I read recently (Tsogyal?) Rimpoche saying that the Vajrasattva practise could cure cancer. Do you think there is anything in that, that visualization practice can actually have an effect on your physical body?

S: Well we don't know all that much about cancer, but it is strongly suspected that there is some psychological factor involved, and if that was the case a psychological method of treatment, for instance any form of meditation, could possibly help. I believe that a Vipassana centre in Rangoon has claimed to have cured cases of cancer by means of Vipassana. I certainly wouldn't like to say that that was impossible, but clearly the evidence needs to be produced.

Padmavajra: Do you think meditation can affect you at the physical level? ever%ofl e S: Well everybody practices meditation so presumably/should be able to have an opinion of the subject. But one does feel a sensation of physical well-being after a good meditation, don't you. This cannot but affect your general physical condition. I must say that I was going to remark that I have noticed that whenever any leading Tibetan Lama, any great Tibetan Guru, falls sick, he goes straight into a Western style hospital! (Laughter) He's taking no chances; well it's true, isn't it. When he--- ought to gather their disciples around them and themselves go into deep meditation, and have all the disciples meditating and hey presto they would be cured! (Laughter) I am sorry to be so sceptical and possibly a little irreverent but I am afraid I can't really help it. It is not that I am quite of the opinion of Henry Ford but I suspect there is

something in what he said when he made that famous remark 'There is a sucker born every minute'. (Laughter) I think if anything the rate has gone up since he made that celebrated remark! Something that I consider important, this is just by the way, I don't know whether it is just an old fashioned attitude but I have always felt it is important that you know your doctor and your doctor knows you. That is to say, knows you both in a personal capacity as well as in a professional capacity, who

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knows you, knows your temperament, knows the way you react to things and obviously knows your system - how it functions, what are its weaknesses, what are its strengths. Do you see what I mean? This obviously suggests a certain stability in one's life, a certain constancy in one's relationships, even. I am not thinking just in terms of the old fashioned family doctor that brought you into the world and sometimes closed your eyes when you went out of it too, but I think that sort of continuity of personal contact is quite important in this connection. I also think I made the point in the lecture that the doctors in Ancient Greece very often were also priests, priests of Asclepius. So they recognized their function as being in some ways a religious one, or perhaps in a way basically a religious one, certainly not a non-religious one, they probably wouldn't have understood that particular idea. I must have commented in the lecture about the atmosphere which I found at Epidaurus it was certainly quite remarkable. I don't know whether anybody else has been there, one or two of you might have been, Epidaurus. - It is certainly a place that I would advise people to go if they wanted to visit places of importance and some spiritual significance, perhaps, in Greece. There is also at Epidaurus~ a theatre where they put on classical dramas. I think as far as I remember in modern Greek.

Kulamitra: And sometimes in English as well.

V: You spoke in the lecture about the priests at Epidaurus diagnosing by means of interpretation of dreams. Do you think there is anything in this area?

S: I am not sure. I am sure dreams are of general significance. I am sure that dreams will tell one, and perhaps tell the doctor in this sense, about one's mental state, and this must have some bearing on one's physical state. Whether in the literal sense that the Greeks seem to have believed, Asclepius himself inspired you in your dreams and revealed to you what you needed to do, or the medicine you needed to take in order to get better, this I can't be so sure about. Perhaps it is very much a question of interpretation, just as in the case of the Greek oracles. It is not enough to have a dream, you need a priest or an interpreter to tell you what the dream means. And perhaps in the case of the priest of Asclepius he doesn't necessarily take the dream literally, it acts as a trigger for his diagnosis. For instance you might dream of a small bottle, well it isn't necessarily a small bottle of medicine, it may be a bottle of spring water, so the priest may diagnose that you need to drink spring water, or you need to go and bathe in a spring, or something of that sort. There is a sort of interaction between the symbol,

or the surface meaning of the symbol and the priests own knowledge of medicine. It's not that you necessarily say to the priest and say, 'Asclepius came to me and said I should take such and such medicine', I don't think it was so straight forward as that. Whereas this is what we find in the case of the oracles, the message as delivered by the priestess in trance was very, very obscure in meaning. The same with the Tibetan oracles, and there was a particular class of priest whose responsibility it was to interpret the oracle and write it down in Greek hexametres. So it wasn't that the oracle that you were given came just like that, in those very words, straight from the mouth of the °Pythia - What she said was unintelligible to others, the priests interpreted, and what they wrote down, their

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interpretation, that was, so far as you were concerned, the oracle. So I think there may well be, perhaps, the same sort of process, much the same sort of procedure, in the case of these divinitory dreams in the temple of Asclepius. Sometimes, of course, people do know, deep down, what they ought to do to get better. That they ought to rest, for instance, sometimes they know that but their rational mind tells them they can't rest, there is this to do and there is that to do. But deep down they know that what they need is a rest, a holiday, sunshine, fresh air, and so on.

Dharmadhara: You mentioned at the start, in connection with setting up a Buddhist medical system, or Buddhist medical service1 ~resumably there wouldn't be a reliance on drugs. Could you elaborate on that.

S: I didn't mean that drugs should be altogether exclusively excluded. I don't think that is possible. But it certainly seems to be generally agreed that drugs are over-prescribed in the medical profession. I think it is that that we need to discourage. Personally I hardly ever take drugs, a very occasional aspirin, maybe one every two or three years. Maybe sometimes the occasional bottle of cough mixture which of course contains drugs. Well, apart from tea and coffee of course! But strictly speaking, I suppose, if one was going to be really fit one should even discourage things like that, not to speak of alcohol1 or drugs in the more specialized sense.

Cittapala: What is your impression of systems such as Homeopathy which one can apply oneself, or perhaps any other system in which one can educate oneself in the more rudimentary

S: I have taken, myself, Homeopathic medicines, but I don't know if they worked or not. Because I don't know whether whatever I was suffering from just spontaneously became better or not. One needs a sort of monitoring system.

Cittapala: How could one?

S: Well there are certain scientific procedures.

V: Controlled experiment.

S: Yes, right.

Cittapala: I suppose the point I was trying to get to was that in Homeopathy it is, I believe, not so difficult to actually educate oneself in a system of self prescription. Similarly with herbal remedies, as well.

S: I am not so sure, though, that one could do that in cases of really serious illness where one's life was at risk. But only, I think, with regard to minor ailments. Assuming that the system does work, and I suspect it does, though I can't be too sure, well it would be sensible to be able to look after oneself in that way. Though again as no doubt Homeopathy would itself say, prevention is always better than cure, and no doubt we could all pay a lot more attention to the way in which we live and make sure that we live in a way that is conducive to health and not conducive to disease. It is not just a

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question of medicine, it is a question of regular sleep, regular hours of rest, regular exercise, a proper diet. Perhaps the question of diet is one into which we should go; avoidance so far as we can of tinned produce which often contains preservatives. I did read or hear recently that Sainsbury's have decided to ban preservatives from all their canned or tinned food, which was very good. So from that point of view one should patronize Sainsbury's.

V: Various food guides give you an upgrade if you don't have any preservatives.

Dharmadhara: Another technique you mentioned in (Epidores?) or in Asclepian therapy is fasting. What do you think of the benefits of fasting?

S: I am not sure about that. Naturopaths do believe very much in fasting. I think in the West probably fasting is quite good for people because often they over-eat. Naturopathy believes that if you fast the system cleanses itself and you burn up impurities. I don't know how literally that can be taken, because their teaching is - and I have known several Naturopaths in my time in India - that if you abstain from food for a few days you get a slight fever but that fever means that all the toxic matter in the system is being burned up. I believe

though, that there are other explanations. I have not gone into this personally so I don't really have an opinion of my own. But I would imagine for someone who normally tended to over-eat the occasional fast couldn't but be beneficial. It is also good as a discipline, as a means of controlling one's appetites.

Tejananda: The next question is from Ratnaguna and it refers to the ( ? ) about the burning instance in the White Lotus Sutra.

Ratnaguna: In the Sutra, in Chapter 22 Bhaisajyavajra, in a previous life, burnt himself as an offering to the Buddha Radiance of the Sun Moon. Later, in a subsequent lifetime he burns both his arms as an offering, and the *ni sa s* in that chapter that if an one with his mind set on and aiming at Perfect Enlightenment, burn~ his finger or toe in homage to a Buddha's stupa, that is better, more efficacious than giving cities, wives, children etc, as offerings. Notwithstanding the way you have interpreted this in the lecture it does feel to me a bit unBuddhistic and I wonder if this might be a case of an ethnic practice or attitude finding its way into Buddhism?

S: That's possible. If one takes the practise literally it doesn't seem to be in accordance with the spirit of the Buddha's own teaching, so far as we understand that. I would prefer to take it more metaphorically. The context is highly legendary and mythic, after all. I would rather take it as meaning that not only should you dedicate your whole life, say, to the Dharma, to the Buddha, but also be prepared to sacrifice for the sake of the Dharma if necessary. I think I mentioned that in the lecture. But not that, as an act of worship, you should burn yourself.

Ratnaguna: That's what made me ask the question. Because

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there is no need for people to burn themselves. There is no..., it is not actually necessary.

S: If somebody else burns you because you won't give up Buddhism, well that's another matter. But also, one partial explanation I have heard is this: I mention in the lecture that in China and in Chinese cultural areas when monks are ordained, or nuns too for that matter, which means of course that they not only take the monastic vows but also take the



Bodhisattva precepts, they are marked on the top of their heads by cones of burning incense. or whatever. Sometimes three, sometimes five, sometimes seven, that practice is connected with this particular text, they are burning themselves. But I have come across one explanation to the effect that when Buddhism became popular in China so many people wanted to become monks and nuns, many of them just for the sake of support, because Buddhism was popular and it was an easy living, that it became necessary to impose some sort of test, even some sort of trial, and that this practise was introduced then for that reason. This is what I have read somewhere, or heard somewhere, some years ago. I am not sure whether one can say that, yes, that definitely was the reason or not. That does make sense to some extent, and apparently it is a painful experience unless you are absorbed either in meditation, or in some ecstatic state, as apparently some are at the time, but at least you wouldn't be literally torturing yourself, you certainly wouldn't be injuring yourself or depriving yourself of the use of your limbs.

Kulamitra: I had a question in this area. If that story about the test for ordination is so it does seem to suggest a failing on the part of those already ordained that they couldn't just say no on spiritual grounds. I wondered why in the lecture you didn't actually come out directly against monks burning wax on their heads at the time of ordination. Because it does seem to be a form of self-torture, although they have to do it, they don't seem to have much choice. But

S: Yes, some people might be prepared to go through it just Thor the sake of what they gained afterwards.

V: Is there another explanation, that they do That because they are reminding themselves of the sufferings of all sentient beings?

S: It could be an explanation. If your realization of the suffering of sentient beings is so limited that you need to be reminded of it in that way perhaps you are not suited for spiritual or monastic life, as yet. It does strike one as a rather barbarous practice, really.

V: Perhaps it could be, practically speaking, symbolic of your realization of the suffering of all beings.

S: Yes, but you actually do burn these cones and you actually feel the pain.

V: It might still be symbolic.

S: Well not really, no I wouldn't use the word symbolic here. It is representative rather than symbolic.

V: Not that they would have a very limited

experience of human suffering, but

S: I certainly don't think we should introduce any such practice in the FWBO. I believe somebody did once suggest it, just to weed out the weaker specimens, or weaker brethren, as it were. (Laughter). But at Il Convento it is so many times running round the hill. (Laughter)

Ruciraketu: I believe it is a very common part in initiation rites in primitive societies that pain is inflicted on the people being initiated.

S: Yes, this is well known, and there is an explanation. Interestingly enough Gurjieff~ spoke much about this, that pain helped you to remember. Because pain creates a vivid impression, a very strong impression, so that if you experience pain at a certain important juncture of your life, when you are given certain important instructions, or whatever, you are much more likely to remember everything that happens, and everything that was said. Also, of course, in certain primitive communities the pain that is inflicted is a trial of strength or endurance to find out whether you are a boy or you are a man. Among the Red Indians these sort of things were very common. That would seem to be alright on the ethnic or the group level but what about the spiritual community, is it really appropriate there. Surely one should be sensitive enough to pain and suffering without all that.

(end of side 1)

presumably you have enough mindfulness that you don't need to have whatever lessons you learn stamped on your memory with the help of an associated painful experience.

On the other hand, putting in a word on the other side, one doesn't want to encourage people to be too soft, or too little able to bear hardship and suffering. And I think quite a few people nowadays, quite a few of our own Friends are rather of that type. They shrink, sometimes from inconvenience and discomfort, not to speak of pain and suffering. But there is no point in inflicting them unnecessarily upon oneself, or to prove anything, to prove any particular point; but one should be prepared to endure hardship and even suffering if that is necessary for the sake of one's own spiritual development or for the sake of spreading the Dharma. But if someone was to say, 'I don't want to go and give lectures in that place, it's much too hot there.' well that is really feeble and ~eminate, one might say.

Dhammananda: Over the last few days we have been talking about f~re as a transformer, as it were, and I remember reading this part in the sutra, after burning his arms (people ? or people complained?) not only complained (they are ? by it?) then Bhaisajya~aja, (then with this other name?) says 'I am convinced that I am going to attain Perfect Enlightenment' and if that's true then these arms should be restored. So could one interpret the case, and the arms actually are restored, could one interpret this incident as, perhaps, a sort of purification of the arms, being more effective as, becoming more effective as, (and later?) the divine healer?

S: One could do, but on the face of it one is left with the literal act itself. Yes, it can have that meaning, but nonetheless that doesn't make it any the less a literal act according to the sutra. So a literal act in a sutra can be the precedent for a literal act in the life of the Buddhist, and in fact I think this is what we are really concerned with.

Cittapala: In terms of developing one's ability to endure hardship if necessary, are there any sort of instances, like for instance, certain practices to do with say solitary retreats which one could incorporate? I believe in some Tibetan systems you maybe go away with minimal clothing or a very severe diet, or something of that nature.

S: Well there are all sorts of things that one can do. I think there are broadly speaking two kinds of things that one can do. Things that you do just to develop, say, your powers of endurance, but which have no significance in themselves, no spiritual significance. Others which you do, perhaps, to develop your powers of endurance, and so on, but which also have some spiritual significance. For instance you could look upon the prostration practice as falling into the second category. You could decide to do, say, a thousand prostrations every day during a solitary retreat, not only to strengthen your feeling for going for refuge but also as a-what shall I say - a sort of test of your endurance. Do you see what I mean? But if you were to just go outside your retreat hut every day and spend an hour just lifting up some big heavy stone and putting it down again, well that would test your endurance, but it wouldn't have any particular spiritual significance apart from that. I think perhaps that we should normally lead a life, our daily regimen or routine should be such that we are, as it were, strengthened rather than weakened. Do you see what I mean? Not too many mornings lying in bed, not taking things too easily; not too many holidays, not too many visits to the cinema. All this, quite apart from the question of distraction, and so on, can be very weakening. One can end up a rather weak, effeminate creature if one isn't careful, under modern conditions. We very rarely have to work hard, and certainly very rarely have to keep it up day after day, week after week, month after month, in the way that many people have to do in the world still, just to survive. We very rarely work for the Dharma with that sort of vigour and with that sort of indifference to haw~hip and discomfort.

Cittapala: Do you think there are any things we can bear in mind in times in terms of how we furnish our communities? I have noticed that some of my ex-community mates moved into Sukhavati recently and one of the comments that they made was that Sukhavati is now a very comfortable place to be.

S: Well what does one mean by comfortable? It can mean all sorts of things to all sorts of people. The princess in the fairy tale was uncomfortable even though she had dozens and dozens of mattresses because there was one pea right at the bottom.' I hope they are not comfortable in Sukhavati in that sort of sense (laughter) I doubt it actually. But comfort is relative. But yes, I think first of all in communities, they should be clean - not only in the obvious sense but in the hygienic sense, clean and tidy. Then aesthetically pleasing.

And I think comfortable in the sense that they are convenient, you are not constantly being irritated by things that aren't quite right. I don't think they should be comfortable in the sense of having very thick mattresses on every bed and very thick carpets on every floor - do you see what I mean? But things should work, the flush system should work, the door should close properly - do you see what I mean? And there should be enough cups and plates and saucers and cutlery, and things like that, so that life is made convenient so that you are not bothered and don't have to waste time on these sort of details, they more or less look after themselves. But certainly not comfortable in the sense of luxurious. And of course, I am not sure that I mentioned this, but aesthetically pleasing, I think that is very important. But very often it is a question of money, it isn't always forthcoming. But I think, yes, certainly we ought to devote great care to our surroundings, as well as to our own bodies. And yes, have everything clean, neat, tidy, convenient, aesthetically pleasing, but not luxurious. Not comfortable in a self-indulgent sort of way. I doubt very much if Sukhavati is comfortable in that sense. But does anyone have any ideas about this. How does one define comfort.

V: I believe the etymology is 'with strength'.

S: Com-fort, yes. But I suppose people's notions of comfort differ. Some people don't mind a hard chair, a hard bench, a hard bed. All of the time I was in India I never had a proper mattress, and I never had a meditation cushion, I had never seen a meditation cushion, they don't use them in India, you just had a piece of towelling on the floor, nothing more than that, ever. Never thought anything of it.

Cittapala: It does seem that standards can sort of creep up. (S: Yes) (Laughter) It is very noticeable, say in England now, that wall to wall carpeting is considered to be quite normal really.

S: Yes. For instance someone visited Goethe's house in Weimar some years ago and wrote about it, and Goethe was a well to do person, he was a minister at the court for many years, in fact he was the Prime Minister, in a way, practically all his life, privy counselor and all the rest of it, and a close friend of the Duke. And the visitor to Goethe's house, which is now a museum, was surprised how small and simple and bare it was, there were no carpets on the floor. Goethe - didn't have carpets, it was just the bare wooden floor, maybe with one or two small carpets here and there, and the furniture was extremely plain and simple, and not much of it. And that was how it was in his day. I believe, if I am not mistaken, there wasn't a comfortable armchair in the place. So we mustn't be comfortable in the luxurious sense. Certainly don't sit down chairs which deform the body. I had to give some thought to this because I spend practically the whole day at my desk, so I don't want a comfortable chair in the sense of a beautifully padded one, but I want one that doesn't give me back ache. Now I have, - formerly I used to suffer a bit from back ache but since someone got me this proper office type chair two or three years ago I have had no back trouble at all, I never get back ache even if I spend the whole day writing

st my desk. So that isn't just comfort in the more ordinary sense, that is in a way just common sense. So you would have that sort of bed, that sort of chair, that sort of table, so that your health isn't affected and you are not put to such discomfort that you can't get on with your work. We can also make use, so far as we can, of simple, cheap, materials. But keep a decent standard. It must vary from one country to another, say in India the standard would be much lower than is possible here. I was really surprised when I came back from India, the difference that I noticed in people's standard of living. I noticed it wherever I went, in my own family, the standard with regard to carpets and furniture, and decorating in general had seemed to have gone right up while I was away. I also found it quite interesting, in a way, from this point of view, going to Il Convento every year, which is quite simple, even a bit stark, compared with say Padmaloka. In some ways I find it quite a pleasing contrast. I think maybe if we do get this place in Spain we will keep things a bit spartan. Because where there is sunshine you can live more simply, you don't mind being spartan if there is plenty of sunshine, you spend much more time outside, anyway. You can sit under a tree and meditate, sit under a tree and read, you don't have to be indoors.

Tejananda: We have got a couple of more questions on this, I don't know whether it might have been covered. The next one is from Saddhaloka.

Saddhaloka: I think some of it was covered but ( ? so I'll just go through. Noting the danger of literalism apparently a problem in the East as well as in the West, given the example of the Chinese and Vietnamese monks burning wax and incense on their bodies, and further noting the unfortunate Christian associations many will bring to the mention of the burning of toes and fingers as a form of sacrifice; the question was raised in our study group if it might be unwise to speak at all in terms which would seem to give spiritual justification to such practices. Could you comment please?

S: Well if one is going through the sutra then one necessarily encounters that passage, and people will naturally ask one what it means, and they may even know that the Vietnamese monks have burnt themselves. So one can't really avoid saying something, and what one says, I suppose, depends upon the people that you are actually dealing with at the time. Just to go back a minute, just before you asked your question. Another aspect of this whole question of simplicity of living just occurred to me, and that was with regard to clothes. Nowadays lots of people have lots and lots of clothes. In the Buddha's day, with regard to the bhikkhus - I won't say monks - the bhikkhus, they just had usually three robes, as we call them, three cloths; and in the climate of India you could make do with that. Nowadays you read of, or perhaps you know people who have twenty or thirty pairs of shoes, or they have got twenty sports jackets - and this is too much. (Laughter) So I think one can keep one's stock of clothing down. One doesn't really need more than two pairs of shoes, one doesn't really need more than, perhaps, two suits, at the most, probably one would do. Do you see what I mean? But in the world, so to

speaking, people do go in for these things. In the case of women, for instance, I mention this in case any ladies ask your advice, women, I think, shouldn't use cosmetics. And one shouldn't spend an extraordinary amount of money on clothes when one can just as easily buy simple things. Certainly, if you are going to have to function in the world, maybe go and see bank managers, you need to wear decent clothes, but they need not be very expensively fashionable - that is just a Waste of money. You hear of.., I know young men, not in the FWBO, but friends of young men in the FWBO, spend £75 for a pair of shoes. Well unless I am completely out of touch and shoes have gone up to that extent, that seems to me to be absolutely criminal, to spend that amount of money on a pair of shoes. (Laughter)

And of course items of personal adornment, especially in the case of women. Necklaces and expensive earrings and all that sort of thing, that is to be discouraged, I think. Also spending a lot of money on hair-dos. (Laughter) I think some people do spend a lot of money, don't they, on having things done to their hair, washed and rinsed and dyed even, and shingled (Laughter) and so on, and all sorts of weird things done to it. It is a sheer waste of money, actually, you just need to wash your hair, maybe just shampoo it occasionally. Men are even being affected in this way, before these things were confined to women, man would have considered it unmanly to have his hair treated in that sort of way, but men seem to go in for these sorts of things nowadays, especially young men. It just seems a terrible waste of money.

And very, very expensive meals. I know I am completely out of touch here. My eyes were opened last year when someone wrote about Hockneys, wrote an appreciative article and said that two people could have a meal at Hockneys for as little as £17 for the pair of them, my hair nearly stood on end (Laughter). I have since read guides to various restaurants, there is a series going on in the London Illustrated News, and its hair-raising - £90 for two people. This is really ... it is from our point of view a waste of money. I would even go so far as to say a British Rail sandwich is a waste of money, take your own, don't spend money on this sort of stuff. Isn't it a pound or more for a wretched sandwich?

Voices: No. Seventy-five P. (Laughter.)

S: So these are things on which one can spend money, or the ordinary person often spends money to a quite unreasonable, almost immoral extent. Clothing and food. Anyway lets pass on.

Tejananda: Kulamitra has a question on the association of the Bodhisattva Vow with self-torment.

Kulamitra: No, that I asked in the context of Ratnguna' S question.

Tejananda: O.K Ruciraketu on the Buddha as cosmic principle.

Ruciraketu: This is actually related to the burning question again. In religion and secularism

you speak of this principle

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of 'a human being is first and foremost a human being, and only secondarily a Hindu or Buddhist or Muslim. etc.' One consequence of this principle is that religion exists for the sake of man, not man for the sake of religion. I was wondering if there might be any connection with... if the emphasis in the Mahayana on the Buddha as representing the cosmic principle, whether that tended to devalue the human stage, and hence this came about.

S: I gave that talk in India, didn't I. (R: Yes) So one must bear in mind that particular context. Because one mustn't forget that in India, as in Northern Ireland, the fact that you follow a certain religion means that you belong to a certain social group, and that has even a political significance. And that your membership of a certain religious group, which is at the same time a political entity, may bring you into conflict with other similar groups in such a way that you forget your common humanity. So I was speaking within the context of that kind of situation. Do you see what I mean? As you might say, for instance, in Northern Ireland, whether you are a Protestant or whether you are Catholic is of secondary consideration, what is important is that you are human beings. You are not really saying that a spiritual commitment is unimportant, but I think what I am getting at is something like this: that your spiritual commitment cannot be a real spiritual commitment if it is in actual conflict with your being a human being in the sense of relating to other human beings as a human being. Do you see what I mean? I don't want to undervalue the spiritual commitment because being a Buddhist, so to speak, in the case of Buddhism, isn't an alternative to being human, being a Buddhist is the best way of being human, the highest way of being human, so one doesn't want really to contrast the two. But anyway, coming back to your main point, what was that exactly?

Ruciraketu: Did the emphasis in the Mahayana on the Buddha as representing the cosmic principle lead to a devaluation of the human state?

S: I am not sure about that. But I think, nonetheless, that we need to keep in balance, and here I think the question of balance does come in, the historical and what we may call the archetypal. I think we have to be very aware of the historical Buddha as well as of the archetypal Buddha. The historical Buddha shouldn't be swallowed up in the archetypal Buddha, and I think that has happened in the Mahayana. I think it has even happened in the Hinayana, though to a lesser extent. Yes, I think it is important to keep these two aspects, or two levels, even, in balance, and not let one of them outweigh the other. Because I think if you forget the historical, and after all you do live on the historical plane, mainly, if all your attention is concentrated on the archetypal Buddha and if you are not actually living on that archetypal plane then what happens is you have a purely, or more or less purely, conceptual understanding of that. Which means you are not really occupied with the historical, but you are unable to be really occupied with the archetypal. So you are alienated

to some extent from the historical, and in place of the archetypal you have something just conceptual. So I think you musn' t emphasise the archtypal at the expense of the historical, and certainly if you do that then it means

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you are, perhaps, to some extent, alienated from your actual position - rooted as you are in space and time, in history. And inasmuch as you are not really rooted, or don't appreciate the fact that you are rooted there, you make less spiritual progress, you are less likely to grow as a human being.

Ruclraketu: I though there might also be a connection with this self mortification. Because I have heard of Nitcheren monks, for instance, burning incense on their arms and things like this. And I wondered, in a way, if they just lost touch with humanity in a very simple sense.

S: I am not sure about that, I don't quite see how that might connect.

Ruciraketu: Well, in the sense of sacrificing human values to something more abstract.

S: But this raises the question what does one really mean by sacrifice? Shouldn't one, say, sacrifice oneself for the sake of Enlightenment. I think perhaps the question is, is that actually sacrifice in the true Buddhist sense of the term. Not that actually, Buddhism in the sense of the teaching of the Buddha, uses the language of sacrifice, it is not really a Buddhist language. The language of growth and development is a Buddhist language, but not the language of sacrifice. The Buddha doesn't say sacrifice yourself, he doesn't say sacrifice your life, he doesn't say sacrifice your ego. So that isn't really the language of Buddhism. I always avoid it, you very rarely find me using the word sacrifice in a Buddhist context, I quite consciously avoid that. I don't think it really represents the spirit of Buddhism. But I think Buddhists in the West, at least, have to do this very difficult thing of being very aware of the Buddha as a historical personality, and at the same time, through that, or by means of that even, having a glimpse of the archetypal Buddha which is above and beyond the historical. But the fact that you have a glimpse of that trans-historical Buddha shouldn't cause you to lose sight of the historical Buddha himself. That has its own quite inestimable value. So Mahayana Buddhists tend to lose the historical in the archetypal. I have met Tibetan Buddhists who have never heard of Sakyamuni, and on the other hand the Hinayanists, say the Theravadins, they tend to lose the archetypal in the historical - not that they have a very vivid apprehension even of the historical Buddha. We need to improve on both perhaps.

V: Another interesting phrase here - that we try to study the archetypal through the historical.



S: Yes, they aren't really two Buddhas, apart from your own visualizations and higher spiritual perceptions, and so on, how do you know about the Buddha except through the human historical Buddha who appeared here two thousand five hundred years ago. All your transhistorical Buddha's and Bodhisattvas are extrapolations from that, you may say. Not that there isn't that archetypal, as it were metaphysical dimension, there is, but until such time as we can establish independent contact with it we are dependent upon our knowledge, within the framework of space and time, of the historical Buddha and his historical teachings, so far as we can make

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that out. I have thought recently that maybe there should be some kind of course of study on the life of the Buddha. Taking that particular tack. I think within the Movement still there is insufficient knowledge about the life of the Buddha. Its partly because the material is scattered and has to be brought together from a number of different sources, but I think we should try to acquaint ourselves better with the life of the Buddha, his historical career so far as we can make that out, many episodes are in dispute or open to various interpretations.

V: I think the Life of the Buddha by ~anamoli is very good.

S: Yes, some people do find that very useful. Asv~aghosa~+s Thddhacaritawhichl reread recently is also very useful. There is now, in the Order Library, in fact there are two copies, of the recently issued complete edition, there is not only the first half translated directly from the Sanskrit, but the half which is missing in the original Sanskrit, translated from the Chinese translation. So one has now all twenty four chapters of the work. And there is a very lengthy introduction.

Cittapala: So that would actually constitute a complete study of the life of the Buddha?

S: I think it is the most complete of the traditional accounts. The general scholarly view is that Asvaghosa was a Sarvastivadin and he has definitely reduced what we would describe as the legendary element, to a minimum, as much as it could be reduced for an Indian audience. It is definitely, within its limitations, historically oriented, it does seek to give a picture of what we would describe as the historical Buddha. So it is quite interesting and useful from that point of view. If you want a completely, or almost completely, legendary life, read the translation of the Lalitavistara. I have recently acquired the English translation of the French version of that, I haven't yet put it in the Order Library, but it is a two volume work - very inspiring, very beautiful indeed. Embodying here and there chunks from very early traditions about the historical Buddha but they really do stand out in that very, very legendary context.

One could well read both of these.

V: Is the Asvagosha, the new version...

S: It's not a new version, it is a new edition. The translation Throm the Sanskrit half was done by a scholar called Johnston an American scholar, and the translaton from the Chinese was also done by the same scholar, but this is the first time they have been published together in the same volume, the second half, formerly, was only available in an issue of a learned journal published many many years ago. But now a publisher has brought them together in a single, quite large, volume, so you have got the whole thing there with a very lengthy introduction.

V: Is this very recent?

S: Yes, it's a year or two ago.

Cittapala: What's your impression of the translation?

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S: Ooh, Asvaghosa wrote in what is called the ~arvia style, the ornate, classical, poetic style of his day. Its literary value is very high, considering it purely as a work of poetry in the original Sanskrit, he is generally considered a very worthy precursor of '~alidasa who is generally considered the greatestof Indian Sanskrit poets. So the language, although quite simple, is, at the same time ornate - if you see what I mean. With many figures of speech, it is very highly polished. So not easy to translate into English, and perhaps even more difficult to translate into Chinese, it does seem as though the Chinese translator did not always quite understand the meaning. So the English version of the Chinese translation from the Sanskrit doesn't read quite as well as the English translation from the Sanskrit. But there are many footnotes to help you understand the meaning and giving alternative possibilities. So it is certainly well worth one's while reading the whole work.

Cittapala: So one wouldn't really need to have a Sanskrit dictionary (S: Oh no) like one does when one is studying the Udana or something like that.

S: No, because much of it is narrative. On the other hand There are a number of philosophical expositions, including one of the Sankya philesophy, which is quite obscure in parts, but the general drift is quite clear. Asvaghosa is also quite fond of parallels with Hindu myths, because apparantly he worked for a partly Hindu audience, and in order to make the Buddha's life easy for them to understand. So he compared certain incidents in the life of the Buddha with incidents in the lives of various Hindu heros.

Tejananda: Now Ruciraketu would like to ask you about the Tanka of the Medicine Buddha.

Ruciraketu: I was wondering who the figure is in the middle at the bottom?

S: To the best of my knowledge that is the minister of Tsong-kam-gampo who went to India - what was his name? Tommy Sambhvt0 I think he is included because to the best of my recollection among other works, he translated an Indian medical work into Tibetan. So I think that is why he is there. But you would need to check that, I am pretty certain but I won't absolutely vouch for it. That is Tommy SambhVtag

Ruciraketu: The other two figures, are they Hyagriva and Sridevi?

S: Could be, I won't be sure of that, but they could be. I wouldn't be sure why. Yes, it is Sridevi because of that sea of blood, I think. (Laughter) I certainly don't know why those two figures have been included rather than any others. They are sort of wrathful divinities, obviously. I don't know what their particular connection is with the tradition of Bhaisajyavaja. There must be some reason for the connection.

Tejananda: Now Suvajra had a question about your Vietnamese friend mentioned in the tape.

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Suvajra: The first art is, could you let us know what actually happened to your Vietnamese friend, if you actually know.

S: Which Vietnamese friend was this, what did I actually say?

Suvajra: The Vietnamese monk who stayed with you in your Vihara in Kalimpong.

S: There were two that used to come and stay quite frequently.

Suvajra: This one had gone back to Vietnam to set up a University.

S: That was °Min Chow

Suvajra: And I wondered if you could tell us something about him, himself.

S: About him in what way?

Suvajra: What sort of person he was and what your relationship with him was.

S: That time he was studying at the Sanskrit University and he used to come up and spend his holidays with me quite often, partly to get away from the heat. And in that way we got to

know each other. He was a very scholarly monk and he is that author of that comparative study which we have in the Order Library, of the PaliMa:jjhyimaNikaya and the Chinese translation of the (Majihyima maarkama?). Also the author of A Life of Ventrang which we have in the Order Library. So definitely a scholar monk, not a meditating monk, and very active in the affairs of the Sangha and very active in Buddhist works generally, especially educational and scholarly work in Vietnam. He became the rector of Van Han University and of course they did all suffer during the war and after the victory of the communists. I did get little bits and pieces of news from him, but I have refrained from trying to contact him, though I know he is still alive or was very recently, because I just don't want to prejudice his position there. I believe he somehow manages to function, and I believe that recently Van Han the Buddhist University, has reopened on a very small scale. But I have deliberately avoided trying to contact him. He visited me in London when I was at the Hampstead Buddhist Vihara, that is the last time we actually met. At that time he was quite elderly and quite stout whereas when I had known him in my Kalimpong days he had been younger and slimmer. Perhaps I should mention, I did have quite a bit of correspondence with him before South Vietnam fell to the communists but not after that.

Tejananda: A question from me. On one or two occasions in this series you have listed the various qualities which are personified, as it were, by specific Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. So you refer to a Buddha of Compassion, of Wisdom, Energy, Purity and Peace. Is there in fact a Buddha or Bodhisattva specifically embodying the quality of peace? I can't think of one.

S: I can't think of one either, except one I must remember that

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peace, as we nowadays use the word, is perhaps a specifically Western concept. It doesn't correspond to the Sanskrit Shanti, that is peace in a rather different sense, in a way a more psychological, more spiritual sense. We think of peace mainly as the opposite of war. The Indian word shanti which we usually translate as peace doesn't have that sort of connotation at all. They wouldn't have said, 'The two kings stopped fighting and then there was peace', 'The two kings stopped fighting', I think that would be all that they said. So we must bear that in mind that this concept of peace is really a Western concept.

Tejananda: I think you have referred to the peaceful deities in general. (S: That's true) As opposition to the wrathful ones, as being almost ( ? ) peaceful, and that there is a positive quality of peace, as it were, about them.

S: They are peaceful in the sense of being re-assuring, benign. Perhaps benign would be a truer translation than peaceful, the benign deities rather than the peaceful ones.

(end of tape 15) ... also there is a sort of connotation of gentle. When they use this word, shanta or shant in modern Indian languages they sometimes ~ay 'He is a very shant person',

not meaning a peaceful person but a gentle person. I don't know how it is in Gujarati, can you remember?

V: It's not peace, its not peace in the Western sense (S: It is a gentleness) , gentle, calm.

Tejananda: So the peaceful Bodhisattvas in general embody that but there is no specific, special Bodhisattva.

S: Not that I recollect, no. Certainly not any of the well known Bodhisattvas.

V: I think Amoghasiddhi would have an association with peace in the sense of reassurance, fearlessness, confidence.

S: Seems more like an association with war, in a spiritual sense of course. Unobstructed..., no, I can't feel, personally, that there is any association of peace in particular there.

Tejananda: Final question from Abhaya about music and the Mahayana.

Abhaya: In the chapter we read in association with the lecture today I came across the lines 'All the gods strike the heavenly drums and ever more make music.' This struck me, because it is the only one I have come across in the White Lotus Sutra and the way it refers to music. In descriptions of the Pure Land this and other sutras I have read, the descriptions seem predominantly to do with visuals and fragrance rather than sounds, apart from birds chirping the Dharma.

S: One musn't underestimate the birds, you know.' (Laughter)

Abhaya: Two parts to the question. 1. I wonder why this is. 2. Why Buddhism doesn't seem to have developed a music of its

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own,outside Tibet~comparable with say plain chant and~hymns in Christianity.

S: I think there is a little more music in the Buddhist world Thhan we think. I think it is just that we are not acquainted with it as yet. But I think there isn't very much of it even so. I think, probably, the reason for that is misunderstanding of that original prohibition, the prohibition that is one of the Sramanara precepts. (Quotes in Pali So the nacca is dance, nacca-gita is song, waddita is instrumental music, asi~ikha dasana are probably one could say obscene exhibitions. So I am afraid in the Hinayana music has a bad press. It may well be that in the Buddha's day music was not very highly developed, perhaps it was rather rustic and rather crude and therefore not suitable for bhikkhus. I sometimes compare it to modern rock music, a bit primitive and not helpful for one who is trying to meditate, or something of

that sort. But subsequently in India music did become more highly developed, but the original ban, intended as I believe for different music, continued to be in force and to be applied to that more developed more refined, even perhaps more spiritual music. So there was some development of music in Tibetan Buddhism, though again it is not quite music in the Western sense. And a little bit in Chinese and Japanese Buddhism. But certainly not in Theravada, even though in Thailand they deviate just a shade from the strict norm, some Thai bhikkhus have told me that sometimes their chanting becomes a little bit like singing, and I have heard that they have choirs of sramaneras, boy sramaneras, whose chanting amounts to singing, and that is acceptable nowadays. But it is a very cautious move away from strict orthodoxy and kept within certain very severe limits. I think that is rather unfortunate. One finds in Islam a similar disagreement. Orthodox Muslims, that is Suni - Muslims tend to be quite against music. I don't know whether there is a Koranic reason, a Koranic precedence for this, a Koranic injunction, but they are very suspicious of music. Music is not allowed near mosques, for instance. But the Sufis, some Sufis make very extensive use of music, which they call sama - musical recitals - they use, we would say devotional music, as a means of arousing very intense, very deep spiritual emotions. I believe, there are supposed to be two kinds of Sufis, I don't remember the Persian or ( ? there are the sober Sufis, the one's that practice without music, and then there are the, as it were intoxicated Sufis, intoxicated with music and carried away by that emotionally, and use that intense experience of emotion in that particular context, and it is often accompanied by dancing, as a form of religious practice. But orthodox Muslims especially, the Sunis frown on that quite a lot, so there is quite striking difference of opinion, almost as between Hinaynists and Mahayanists. Although even the Mahayanists don't use music in quite the way the Sufis do. The best Sufi teachers seem to be well aware of the dangers of that. They are very well aware that Sufis having recourse to music and these sort of emotionally charged recitals and concerts have to be at the same time very cautious that those more refined emotions can very easily sink to a grosser level, they are very well aware of that possibility, that danger.

Abhaya: So with that in mind, transferring that sort of caution

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to our context, we would say that in the FWBO we sort of correct that imbalance, would you say? Against the traditional sort of approach to music.

S: Yes. But I think perhaps we have to be very careful what sort of music we use, we don't have any Buddhist music, as yet.

Abhaya: I mean from the point of view of actively developing a Buddhist music. You would encourage that?

S: I wouldn't discourage it. I don't see it as very high on The list of priorities, I certainly wouldn't discourage it. I don't take a very active interest in it personally, not that I don't like

music but I don't see anybody able to do anything about it, at the moment. Because our musical tradition in the West is, in a way, in such disarray. What would one do, would one adapt bits of Bach and Mozart and Handel, or would one create something entirely new. But it would have to be very, very good indeed. That suggests a musical genius. It is difficult enough to find a musical genius anyway, not to speak of a musical genius who is also a committed Buddhist, and a member of the Western Buddhist Order. This would seem at present to be an almost impossible requirement. So I am not very actively concerned with it, while remaining, broadly speaking, in favour of music.

Abha~: I think I have perhaps..., I have also got in mind our attitude to this traditional approach which people will certainly pick up. People have certainly said to me, why is there no music, why don't you have more hymns and things.

S: Right. I think perhaps a lot of people in the FWBO wouldn't be happy with hymns, because of the resemblance to Christian services.

Abhaya: Yes, I am not saying that we should have hymns! (Laughter) But that we actively discourage that traditional ban or prohibition on the value of music.

S: Right, yes. Well that places us definitely within the Mahayana rather than the Hinayana tradition. But things are made rather difficult for us at present because so much music that people hear, especially so to speak popular music, has got no obvious spiritual content and is clearly a distraction from the point of view of the spiritual life, even harmful.

Abhaya: Incidentally Bhante, I thought your lines composed on retreat 'Silence would make a very good FWBO hymn' - said it to me.

S: Just hummed under one's breath. (Laughter) This, I think, is one of the reasons we don't attract more black people, people from West Indian communities, say, because they love lots of hearty rousing singing, love to join in, whereas there isn't anything of that sort in the FWBO. Once I was visiting a community and I passed a church which had been taken over by some West Indian Pentacostal group and they were almost raising the roof with their singing and clearly enjoying it so much, well our little Pujas would seem rather dull to people who are accustomed to that sort of thing.

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Cittapala: In that connection, Bhante, in the Dharmachakra archive we have got one or two tapes of, I believe, Ananda and a few of his friends adding some musical accompaniment -if that's the right word - (laughter) to some Pujas in the early days, and I was wondering what your impressions of those experiments.

S: I can't remember. I don't think they amounted to much, maybe a bit of...

Cittapala: They were certainly very hearty.

S: Oh, maybe I wasn't present! (Laughter) I think I couldn't have been, I remember little bells and gongs and things like that, I probably wasn't around for that.

Cittapala: Is that something we could experiment with?

S: Yes, I think we could. But I think we need to try it out within the Order, or at least with Order Members and Mitras, before we launch it on the public, as it were, or incorporate it in a public puja.

V: Didn't you suggest the bagpipes once, Bhante?

S: We had the bagpipes, we had the bagpipes for the opening of the LBC, they seemed to be quite appropriate on that occasion. I must say personally I quite like the bagpipes, I don't think everybody does. I must have been a Scotsman in my previous life. (Laughter)

V: Congratulations. (Laughter)

S: Having said that you will have to provide a bagpiper. But that is quite a pleasant sound. Not too close, as it were. (Laughter) I believe the bagpiper that we did have was somebody's brother, wasn't he?

V:

S: He wasn't very expert but he was certainly good enough for the occasion. I think on a public, open air occasion you need something like that, a definite strong sound that will carry, a bit like the Tibetan trumpets. It reminded me a little bit of those Tibetan trumpets, that type of sound, it's a very strong sound. It is not music in the ordinary sense, it's sound rather than music, if you see what I mean. I don't mean noise (laughter) definitely sound. But yes, I think the bagpipes have a quite stirring sound, and only too often music is enervating rather than rousing and stirring, and perhaps people need to be stirred, roused, more than just tickled or sent off to sleep. Do you have the bagpipes in Glasgow, do you use them?

V: We have done a couple of times.

S: Not quite suitable for retreats but festive occasions I would have thought they would be quite suitable, especially in the open air. Maybe make a start with the bagpipes. Maybe one could look into different tunes. I am not quite sure what they play on the bagpipes, there are definite



traditional tunes, I believe, and no doubt some will be more suited to our purpose than others.

Tejananda: That's all.

S: That's it - well on that note (laughter) with a skirl on The bagpipes, we conclude.

(end of tape 16)

Extract at the end of the Bodhisattva Ideal Study Leaders seminar concerned with various translations of the White Lotus Sutra.

Tejananda: Finally with regard to the next session of study, on the White Lotus Sutra. We had a meeting this afternoon in which we thought it would be a good idea to start making preparations. For one thing that we could individually to begin- with not only go through the lectures but read the White Lotus Sutra, and the question in particular is, what translations do you best recommend, or which translation, above all, if any?

S: What have we got, we've got Kern from the Sanskrit, we've got Hurvitz from the Tibetan is it?

V: I think its from the Sanskrit.

S: Sanskrit consulting the Tibetan. Then we have got Soothill and those who tried to revise him, who haven't done it very well. Oh dear, its not easy. I think probably, on the whole Hurvitz but maybe read the one in the Threefold Lotus Sutra, which is the one based on Soothill, more to get the feeling of the poetry. Soothill did it really well, I did have his translation, ( ? ) translation in the original edition, but I am afraid someone borrowed and never gave it back. It has been reprinted but I am afraid I haven't got a copy of it in print, but I think that is the best version though it isn't complete, unfortunately.

V: You actually think Soothill's version is better than Hurvitz?

S: From a poetical point of view. The revised one I checked a few passages when I was revising the Eternal Legacy, I found that Soothill, in the few instances I checked, quite accurate when I consulted the Sanskrit text, whereas in so called revising him, the scholars revising him had actually departed from the Sanskrit text and distorted the meaning and also spoiled his language. So I was rather annoyed about that. That may not have been done very frequently but it was certainly done in some key passages I checked.

V: What title does the Hurvitz translation come under?

S: The Fine Dharma of the White Lotus, or something like that. tWhite Lotus of the Fine Dharma, yes.

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Tejananda: We came up with the idea of not only studying it as we have in all this, but actually reciting, if possible, the whole sutra, during the ...

S: That would be good, you can certainly do that. Also you can swot up on the appropriate chapter in the Eternal Legacy. I give a sort of summary of the whole sutra, with comments and explanations chapter by chapter. I think it is probably the longest chapter in the book.

There is another book in the Order Library, The Lotus Sutra in Chinese Buddhist Art, which you could look at when you come here, that would just give you another angle on it.

Dharmapriya: Bhante, I believe that this Golden Mountain monastery in San Francisco, or one of their names, is issuing a new translation of that with commentary.

S: That's true, it is really dreadful, I am afraid. I have got several volumes of it. I would hoping that they would do better, they just get bogged down. It isn't really commentary, they just bring in all sorts of material, at every step, and the text is lost sight of. It is not an intelligent commentary, though there is some useful information in it. And their language, from a literary point of view, is dreadful, in all those translations. It is done by a committee and it is so wooden and mechanical, without feeling, almost as though produced by a computer. In view of all the effort they are putting into it, which is really quite admirable, that is a great pity, but I think their translation is almost totally devoid of literary value. Also they have got their own English coinages for certain technical terms and sometimes you are not sure what Sanskrit term ( ? ) is back of their particular English expression. And that doesn't help with understanding the text.

Dharmapriya: Does the same apply to their translation of the Avatamsaka Sutra?

S: To the best of my knowledge it applied to all their translations, I don't find them at all satisfactory. Which is a great pity in view of the amount of work that goes into them. They are very sincere in their endeavors but I think rather unimaginative, not to say even sometimes unintelligent.

Kulamitra: I was thinking, I thought this in relationship to The Life and Liberation of padmasambhava, that maybe as people do learn Tibetan and in other cases Sanskrit, one of the most useful things they could do for us, before doing full translation, would be to go back and find out what the original terms were.

S: Yes indeed, that would be most useful.

Kulamitra: That would really clear up some of the other translations.

S: Indeed, yes it would. This can be very easily done by someone with just a very slight knowledge of the language. Some Order Members are doing it already for themselves, in the case of translations of Pali texts. Fortunately Pali texts are issued in editions in Roman

characters, so it is not very

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difficult to look up the corresponding passages in the Romanized Pali and work out which technical term is actually being used for ( ? ) in this particular English translation.

Kulamitra: I was thinking they could not only do that but circularise it so that those of us have the translations.

S: Yes, revised translation, revised in the light of the original technical term, or having the original technical term included in brackets after the translation. That would be - very useful.

Kulamitra: Or even before that, because that is a financial ( ? ) at least you could have notes so that when you were reading the translation you could refer to those notes.

S: Yes, when a certain translator uses the term Absolute, well actually that is meant to translate Dharmakaya. That is very useful to know, because there are all sorts of implications, all sorts of connotations and associations with regard to the term Dharmakaya which you certainly could not deduce from the term Absolute, even in a Buddhist context. For all you know it might be Sunyata, to know that it was Dharmakaya would be very helpful.

Kulamitra: In the Life and Liberation, particularly the use of English, I thought, is very beautiful.

S: Yes, a great improvement.

Kulamitra: But it is often in such unusual English that you just don't know what the original

S: Yes, you get a very good general idea, a good general Feeling for the text and the teaching, but you couldn't make that text a basis for detailed study, you would not be able to use sufficient precision for that to be possible.