

General Introduction to Sangharakshita's Seminars

Hidden Treasure

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sangharakshita's Literary Executors and the Adhithana Dharma Team

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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](#).

Those present:- The Ven. Sangharakshita, Marlene Halliday, Janet Martin, Stephanie Blyth, Noel Lehané, Marje Zeef, Vajragita, L(z) Bubez, Eve Gill, Els Witschaff, Trish Mander, Elsie Ke ng, Teresa Fisher, Ann Morgan, Beryl Cary, Carla Halstead, Sulocana, Christine Robertson, Vimala, Punyavati, Annie Leigh. The Sutras~~~~ of 42 Sections John Blofield (first) The Buddhist Society, London 1977 (revised edn.)

Sangharakshita ... Page 10. You can read the introductory matter by yourselves. Let me say a few words to begin with about this text as a whole. A potted history very briefly. You know, I'm sure, that Buddhism went to China from India. It went, or it began to go, so far as we know, in the very early centuries of the Common Era and obviously it was introduced, Buddhism was introduced, into China little by little. It was wandering monks making the journey from India via Central Asia, or from Central Asia itself, who took Buddhism to China. And, of course, they took the scriptures. And, of course, the scriptures had to be translated. So we find that at the beginning the scriptures weren't translated completely. That is to say, complete scriptures weren't translated. It seems as though very early on two Chinese missionaries, two Buddhist monks from Central Asia, made a sort of selection from various scriptures, various sutras, and arranged them in Chinese for the benefit of the Chinese people. It's a bit like what is happening in the West today, or a bit like what did happen. You usually didn't get whole works translated into English or into French or into German. Usually it was anthologies. It was selections of texts taken from various sources which were translated. We still have a number of these like Warren's 'Buddhism in Translations' or Woodward's 'The Word of the Buddha' or Christmas Humphreys's 'The Wisdom of Buddhism' or Bert's 'The Teaching of the Compassionate Buddha'. So in much the same way these two monks of the later Han Dynasty, that is to say, Kasyapa Matanga and Gobharana, some say Gobharatna, from central India going via Central Asia, made a selection of passages from various Buddhist works, as far as one can see, and arranged them in the form of a continuous series, in the form of a sutra, as though the Buddha had given one saying after another. Though one can hardly imagine him speaking in this sort of way. You also notice another thing. That many of the sayings begin "The Buddha said". Why do you think this is? Actually most sutras begin in the original, "Thus have I heard. The Buddha was at one time..." etc. etc. But these sections mostly begin, "The Buddha said". Why do you think that is?

Elsie : I think it's very much to do with the culture at the time. Like in China itself, most of the people were educated in Confucianism and Taoism and they were used to what 'The Master said', so I think some people might....

S : Yes, because there is a Chinese work, a Confucian work, in English we call it 'The Analects of Confucius'. It's really the sayings of Confucius, in some cases little

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S(ctd) : conversations which Confucius had with his disciples. So each section begins with, 'The Master said', 'Confucius said'. So when these two monks translated these various passages, as it appears in Buddhist sutras, they arranged them in a way that would be familiar to the Chinese people, especially to those educated in Confucianism. It's rather like, for instance, (Paul Carus?) when he puts together selections from Buddhist scriptures. He

called it 'The Gospel of the Buddha' because the Western, the Christian, reader would be familiar with the idea of a gospel. So instead of the gospel according to St. Matthew or the gospel according to St. Mark, you had the gospel of the Buddha. That was, I mean, a bit in accordance with people's way of thinking. It was putting the whole thing in a way they could understand. And that perhaps, in that way at least, is no longer necessary. But you could see how it might be helpful in the earlier days when Buddhism wasn't so familiar. So this sort of thing the two monks did when they were introducing the Buddhist scriptures and Buddhist teachings into China, and it's interesting that they made a selection. Presumably they selected teachings which they thought would be of interest to the Chinese people, which would help them, which they needed. Even though some of those teachings went very much against the traditional Chinese, especially Confucian, way of thinking, just as many Western Buddhist teachings go against the Christian way of thinking or thinking or even modern so-called progressive way of thinking. But one may introduce those teachings, or one may consider those more necessary and more important or one may consider as more necessary or more important those teachings which go along with our present way of thinking. Or one might think a combination of the two would be useful. But however that may be, these two monks made their selection from the sutras. At least, that is what we infer, because there is no Pali or Sanskrit work corresponding to this Chinese work. We therefore infer they took these different passages from different texts, from different sources, some of which may well have been lost by now in their entirety. And the result was this little compilation which is obviously regarded as not only historically important but as a quite basic sort of Buddhist work. It represents the material which the Chinese people were given, which they first encountered, when they encountered Buddhism. So we're going to go through it section by section. There's 42 sections. We've got ten days, ten sessions. So that means, well, just over four sections per day, per session. We ought to be able to get through it in the time at our disposal. At least let's try to do that. The material isn't always easy going, I must warn you of that. We may have to delve into Buddhist teaching, Buddhist doctrine, quite a bit. You may encounter some ideas which are strange or -unfamiliar. Even others which may give you a bit of a jolt. But it isn't a bad thing that we're given a bit of a jolt sometimes. Also, we

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S(ctd) : may find from time to time, we have to translate the traditional Buddhist terms, so to speak, the traditional Buddhist approach, into something which is more - I won't say more modern - but certainly more directly applicable to ourselves. Anyway, let's deal with that as it comes up. So, we'll just go round the circle with each person reading a section and then we'll just discuss it and try to understand it. So, could we have the first section, please?

Marlene : "When the World-Honoured had become Enlightened, he reflected thus: "To abandon desire and rest in perfect quietude is the greatest of victories. To remain in a state of complete abstraction is to overcome the ways of all the evil ones." In the Royal Deer Park, he expounded the Doctrine of the Four Noble Truths, converting Kaundinya and four others, and thus manifesting the fruit of the Way. There were frequently monks who voiced their doubts and asked the Buddha to resolve them, so the World-Honoured-taught and commanded them, until, one by one, they became Enlightened and, bringing their hands together in respectful agreement, prepared to follow the sacred commands."

S : So, this introductory section is a bit, as it were, biographical. It tells us a bit about the Buddha, a bit about his career. A bit about how he started teaching. So it begins: "When the World-Honoured had become Enlightened, he reflected thus." To begin with this title itself is significant. It's 'lokajyestha'. There's a misprint here in this It's j y e 5 t h a 'jyestha'. It means the elder of the world or even the elder brother of the world. Now what is the significance of this? Especially the significance of the Buddha being called the elder brother of the world or the elder brother of mankind. What would you say was the significance of this?

It suggests that he's more developed or advanced.

S . It suggests that he's more developed or advanced, but... But comes from the same family.

S : Ah~ Comes from the same kind. He's not of a completely different kind, a completely different spec~es. He may be elder, but he's also, he's also, as it were, brother. He's from the same family. He's just more advanced than you are, more developed than you are. So what does that give you?

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S : Yes, it gives you (), it gives you hope. Because if he's simply an -Older brother, not someone from a completely different family, a completely different species, it means that you can grow up into being what he is or what he represents. Therefore this title of ~lokajyestha~, World-Honoured or elder or elder brother of the world is quite important. It's quite significant. So, "When the World-Honoured had become Enlightened, he

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S(ctd) : reflected thus: "To abandon desire and rest in perfect quietude is the greatest of victories." Now, here we must bear in mind the difficulties of translation. This text has been translated into Chinese from, maybe Pali, maybe Sanskrit, maybe Prakrit, maybe Ab~~raMi~~ (7), we don't really know. And it's been translated and translated from Han,-Dynasty Chinese at that, into modern English. So we have to be a bit careful about the translation. We mustn't take the words of the English translation too literally, as though they were precise technical terms. For instance, this word 'desire', 'to abandon desire'. Now this at once raises a very important point. Does Buddhism, in fact, teach us to abandon desire? Are you clear on this point? Anyone got any ideas? I mean, are you trying to get rid of desire or not? Have you made up your minds about it one way or the other? What is the position? What does Buddhism say about desire, abandoning desire?

Eve . It is more your reaction to desire rather than abandoning it.

S . Desire itself is a reaction surely? It's a volitional state. So are you meant to just get rid of it?

Eve . No, it's more a case of actually using that and actually transforming it rather than trying to destroy it.

S : Mm. But desire itself?

Well, it's a condition of human life, isn't it? Craving.

S . Craving. Is craving the same thing as desire? No.

S : No? What's the distinction then?

Marlene : Craving arises after the desire.

S . So first you get desire, then you get craving? So you never get craving without desire having been there first? Could you say that?

Could you repeat that again?

S : Does one not get desire, or rather does one not get craving without desire having come there first? Is there always desire, then craving? I mean, there is a distinction, but is it quite like that?

I think desire is more conscious. S : Des ire is more
conscious~ p~r A~~s More specific. S : More
specific, perhaps. Or is it? Is it more specific? Vaj ragita : Des ire is not so
attached as craving.

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S . Ah, we're getting a bit on the right track. It's not quite so attached
as craving. Can you have such a thing as a good desire?

Yes. S . Can you have a good craving? : No.

S : Ah. So it would seem that craving is necessarily unskilful. Desire
not necessarily so. I mean, I dwell upon thiA~~Al~~tle because sometimes people
ask, with reference to so~t of trick questions. For instance, tJicj say,
does Buddhism teach the cessation of desire? Does Buddhism advise you to
abandon desire, because this is what it says. To abandon desire. Alright, what
about desire for Nirvana? This is a favourite question. Doesn't Buddhism
contradict itself, people may ask. So how can you explain that?
Only by making a distinction between desire and craving. Desire may be skilful.
Yes, you can speak of desire for Nirvana. You can speak of desire for Samsara.
That is unskilful. That is equivalent to craving. So desire is the
more general term and can be either skilful or unskilful. Craving is essentially
unskilful. One might say unskilful desire in Buddhism is called
craving. In Pali the more general term corresponding to our 'desire' is
(c-"anda?) . There is a Pali term ('kam~acanda?) . That means desire for
sensuous experience. This is unskilful. But there is ('dhamma-

craving, desire for the Dharma itself or desire for the Dharma. This, of course, is skilful. But then there is the term 'tanha' or 'trsnā'. Craving. This is never skilful. This is always unskilful. So, one must make this sort of distinction and not be misled by terms in English which translate maybe Chinese, maybe Sanskrit, maybe Pali terms. So, "To abandon desire" - to abandon craving we should say - "and rest in perfect quietude is the greatest of victories." Now, again, this quietude, what does one mean by 'quietude'?

Being undistracted.

S : Being undistracted. But just undistracted? Does it, would it mean just distracted for a short time?

Elsie : More like contentment.

S : More like contentment, yes. It's a state of permanent non-distraction. It's not quietude in the sense of just keeping quiet. Quietude as opposed to activity. It's quietude in a deeper sense than that. Maybe quietude as an English word is not really very appropriate. It's a state of calm, of content, of balance, of tranquillity. It's not just the sort of state you get into when you go away and spend the week-end at your country cottage. So it's almost as if we have to recast the language of the translation. To abandon craving and rest in perfect tranquillity, probably would be better, is the greatest of victories. A victory over what? Or over whom, one could say. Well, victory over craving. Victory over

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S(ctd) : oneself. So, "To remain in a state of complete abstraction is to overcome the ways of all the evil ones." Well, again~ this word 'abstraction'. I mean, is it really a very adequate word? One can get some feeling of what the text is getting at, but this English word 'abstraction'? What does abstraction usually mean? What does it usually refer to?

Distraction.

S : Sort of. Yes. But abstraction is when you are a bit absent, a bit distant, you're thinking of something else. It's not exactly a negative term, but it's not very positive either. But here it seems to mean a sort of sort of positive aloofness from unskilful things. "To remain in a state of complete abstraction is to overcome the ways of all the evil ones." So the language of the translation here, translating from Chinese into English isn't really very happy in a way, is it? Isn't really very fortunate, very appropriate. It's as though it needs to be re-cast. But anyway, one has the picture. One is given the impression ~ the Buddha, having become Enlightened, sitting beneath the Bodhi tree, presumably, having abandoned craving, in a state of perfect tranquillity, having overcome ignorance, having overcome himself, and being at rest, so to speak, in a state of, well, one can't say complete abstraction, but in the transcendental, one might say. That would probably be better. Or, to use, in a way, more up-to-date language, in a state of the highest conceivable irreversible creativity. Rather than

being in a state of reactivity. -- Tien in the text there's a sort of little jump. He's become Enlightened. He gained Enlightenment at Buddhagaya. And then it goes straight on to say: "In the Royal Deer Park, he expounded the Doctrine of the Four Noble Truths, converting Kaundinya and four others, and thus manifesting the fruit of the Way." That didn't happen immediately, of course; immediately after the Enlightenment. It happened after some weeks. The Deer Park was about a hundred miles away from Buddhagaya. But do you notice anything about these two sentences? First of all, you've got the Buddha abandoning craving and resting in tranquillity etc. etc. And then you've got him suddenly, as it were, in the Deer Park expounding the doctrine. So what do you notice here?

Vajragita : He had to walk a hundred miles.

S : He had to walk a hundred miles, yes. But there's something else, not just something, as it were, on the physical plane, but something on another plane. There's another change.

° He's established a method of teaching.

S : He's established a method of teaching, yes, but something even more general than this.

° It's as though they're proving the truth of what he says by saying, well, this manifested the fruit of the Way. It gives a credibility to what goes before.

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S : So when someone expounds the Doctrine in this way, converting and so on and manifesting the fruit of the Way, what does that suggest? What does it suggest is present in him? What particular quality?

Marje : Understanding. S . Understanding, yes, but more than that. He must want to teach it as well.

S He must want to teach. So what's the word for that in Buddhism?

Liz : Compassion.

S : Compassion. So this second sentence implies Compassion. But was there any mention of Compassion in that first sentence? No. There's no reference to it at all. In the first sentence the emphasis seems to be on Prajna, one might say, Wisdom. But in the second sentence there is the emphasis, at least by way of implication, on Compassion. That's where the little jump comes in. It's not really a jump because Compassion and Wisdom are inseparable, but there's no hint of that in the first sentence. But anyway, it's as though that first sentence is necessary. That gives the background, so to speak; Wisdom is there and then when Wisdom manifests, Compassion is there, a teaching is given. So, "In the Royal Deer Park, he expounded the Doctrine of the Four Noble Truths, converting Kaundinya

and four others, and thus manifesting the fruit of the Way." There's a footnote about 'Way'. It says "I have tried to avoid Sanskrit terms in the text." Probably in the Chinese the word was 'Tao'. Probably, because very often translators into Chinese rendered 'Dharma' as 'Tao', which could be translated into English as 'Way', but the original word was, no doubt, 'Dharma', or some form of that. So, "In the RoyalDeer Park, he expounded the Doctrine of the Four Noble Truths". One has to watch this word 'doctrine'. Doctrine of the Four Noble Truths. It's not just a doctrine in the philosophical sense. It's much more than that. The B-,uddha had an Insight into the Four Noble Truths, if, in fact, that is what he actually taught on that occasion. He had an Insight, an Enlightenment. It was that which he was trying to communicate. He didn't just have a doctrine in the intellectual sense. And then, "converting Kaundinya and four others". Again, this word 'convert'. I mean, this is a word, perhaps, that we should be careful of, because it has overtones of missionary activities in the East or in Africa. Converting the heathen and all that. Anyway, we'll let it pass here. We're not misled by it. "converting Kaundinya and four others, and thus manifesting the fruit of the Way." To put it in more modern... the Dharma works. Sometimes people are actually surprised. Though they believe in the Dharma, they are surprised to find that the Dharma actually does work. That if you practise the metta-bhavana, you do actually become more, well, good-tempered, at least, more amiable,

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S(ctd) : more easy to get on with. They may not be so surprised when it works in their case, but when they actually start taking classes and see that it works with other people, well, they seem to be quite surprised. Yes, the Dharma does work. There are such things as the fruits of the Way. The fruits of the Way, or fruit of the Way, is manifested and one does see that. I mean, recently, as you know, I was in India and I could really see there the fruit of the Way beginning to manifest itself in the work that we ourselves have started. Very, very noticeable, very striking. But the Four Noble Truths, I take it everybody's familiar with those, yes? Suffering, the cause of suffering, cessation of suffering and the way leading to the cessation of suffering. Perhaps there's no need for me, really, to say very much about them.

Carla : Bhante, you question whether he did teach that first?

S : Yes. I dealt with this somewhere. I forget where. It might have been in 'The Three Jewels'. But usually when one speaks of the Buddha's first teaching, let us call it, not first sermon, but first teaching, one speaks of the Buddha as proclaiming the Four Noble Truths. But what seems to be the earliest account, I think it's the 'Vinaya Pit-ka', does not actually say that. There is an expression which means something like, well, not just the Buddha taught them, but that the Buddha discussed the Dharma with them. It was more like that. It was that he didn't necessarily, at that time, have a set of fixed framework of ideas. You could say the Buddha communicated with them. He communicated the Dharma, but exactly how or in

what particular, what precise intellectual, conceptual form, we're not told. So it would, I mean, it - may be that the Buddha taught the Four Truths; but the earliest accounts, or what seem to be the earliest accounts, do not actually mention that. So I think that is useful to remember because it reminds us that the Dharma is not to be identified with a particular fixed doctrinal form. Not that you can go 'out and say, well, if you want to know about Buddhism it's the Four Noble Truths or it's the Noble Eightfold Path. It's not so easy, not so straightforward as that. You could conceivably give a perfectly faithful account of the Dharma without mentioning the Four Noble Truths, as such. Then the text goes on to say: "There were frequently monks who voiced their doubts and asked the Buddha to resolve them, so the World-Honoured taught and commanded them, until, one by one, they became Enlightened and, bringing their hands together in respectful agreement, prepared to follow the sacred command" - "There were frequently monks" - bhikkhus presumably, the word 'ffloflk' doesn't really render 'bhikkhū' - "who voiced their doubts". It seems as though there's another little jump, though we're not, we're no longer, as it were, with Kaundinya and the four others. We are at a later stage of the Buddha's career. Maybe he's moving about, meeting different people, teaching them. And: "There were frequently monks who voiced their doubts". What does this suggest? Well, the Buddha has taught, there are monks who are familiar with the teaching,

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S(ctd) : who are monks; 'bhikkhu' suggests that maybe there is a Sanskrit already. But some of the monks, some of the Buddha's followers have got doubts. They are not quite clear. They are not quite sure what... about the Buddha's teaching, about what the Buddha actually means. So they voice their doubts. This is quite important, isn't it? That you voice your doubts. Why is it important?

Because it gets them out in the open.

S : Yes. It gets them out into the open. They can be cleared up. They become clearer to you. If you actually voice them, you may realise what your doubt actually is. Perhaps you weren't very clear about that. So it's good that one should voice one's doubts. By doubts, of course, it's no doubt they mean honest doubts, serious doubts, not just cavilling and carping and all the rest of it. So, "There were frequently" - this 'frequently' is interesting. It's not so easy to understand the Dharma. It doesn't all at once become clear. There may be doubts, honest doubts, sincere doubts; so one voices them. One asks the Buddha, the monks ask the Buddha to resolve them. "so the World-Honoured taught and commanded them". What about this word 'commanded'? Do you think he commanded them? Or what do you think happened? What sort of word is behind this expression?

It's 'commanded' as in 'encouraged'.

S : Encouraged. Yes. I think also there is a tendency in this translation to translate 'sila'

as 'commandment', like the ten commandments. I think it's ~o~ Lhe gave precepts', I think that probably is the meaning here. He taught them and gave them precepts. That is to say he laid down general principles and he also indicated a path of discipline whereby one could actually put those principles into practice. "until one by one" - you see every phrase seems to have a meaning. "one by one". What does that mean?

Individually.

S : Individually, not collectively. Not as a group, but "one by one, they became Enlightened and, bringing their hands together in respectful agreement, prepared to follow the sacred commands." Well, there's a bit of an inconsistency, apparently, here, because if you~ve become Enlightened, well, in what sense do you need to prepare to follow the sacred commands? You are your own light, your own guide then, surely? Wouldn't you have thought so?

Perhaps it's as though they still show respect to the Buddha.

S : Yes, they would still show respect, but it's as though, if 'commands' means 'precepts~, well they are now following the precepts, not as a discipli~n~ but naturally, spontaneously, as an expression of their inner nature, of their actual realisation. They don't have to make an effort, say, not to tell lies and so on. It comes

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S(ctd) : naturally to them. They don't have to make an effort to meditate even. Meditation comes naturally as soon as they find themselves alone and, as it were, with nothing to do. Their mind naturally falls into a state of meditation. What about this: "bringing their hands together in respectful ~r~ifl~rt~ -"? This is the ~ali salutation. So here you also get the devotional aspect coming in. If, from the Buddha, it's a question of Compassion, well, from others in relation to the Buddha it's a question of respect or a question of devotion.

salutation Vajragita : Which q~5 ?

S : Anjali. It's the same as Upasika Anjali. It's the same word as that. It's the folding of the hands, the common Indian gesture of salutation. It is also a gesture made to indicate an offering. You can offer something in that way.

I'm not very clear on why they were prepared to follow the sacred commands, because....

S : Well, this suggests also that they think about it and then make up their minds. But, no, if there was any question of following the sacred commands, so to speak, after Enlightenment, well, it can only be, as it were, spontaneously. I think it's just the language. It's not really quite adequate here. There's no question even of a preparation, strictly speaking, one would have thought. Unless, of course, this refers back to the: "taught and

commanded them, until, one by one," before the time of their gaining Enlightenment. I mean, the grammatical constructions are not quite free from ambiguity. So do you get a clear impression from this, this opening section? It's really quite basic, isn't it? Basic Buddhist philosophy in a way.

Noel : I find it quite reassuring, that phrase about the monks voicing their doubts, because it seems to make ~L quite easy to relate to. I mean if they'd just sort of all together decided to follow the Buddha, like when you read the -Bible , the disciples just got up and followed Jesus. I mean, they weren't just taking it on blind faith, sort of thing.

S : Mm. ~t~At Noel . It's reassuring.

S : Also the Buddha didn't scold them for having doubts. I mean, sometimes I believe, in the Catholic church-this is what I've been told~~if you have doubts about the faith you are told that, well, that is just the work of Satan. You should not listen to those doubts. It's a temptation. But of course, one is, as I emphasised at the time, one is here referring to honest doubts, sinc'ere doubts. I mean 'vicikitsa', which is one of the thre'e' fetters, is sometimes translated as doubt. That's not a very good trans-lation. But if it is translated as doubt, then it means dis-h-onest doubt. That is to say, not a real doubt but a sort of pseudo-doubt that you bring up just to

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S(ctd) : sort of postpone the moment of commitment! But here it is honest doubt. Honest doubt has never been discouraged in Buddhism. There's something a bit like this in Blake, William Blake. Blake says that it is necessary to give error a concrete form, so that it can be judged. So that it can be brought to the last judgement even. This is what he means by the last judgement, giving all errors concrete form, actual embodiment, so that ~ can be clearly seen what they are like and so that they can be judged. So that they can be exposed for what they are, so that they can be dismissed. So it's very important to sort of voice one's doubts, to say what one really thinks in this sort of way, because then the doubt is brought right out into the open. You can see what it's like and deal with it. Or if you can't deal with it yourself, perhaps somebody else can help you to deal with it. Sometimes people are afraid of having doubts. But if they bring it out into the open, they realise it's not such a terrible doubt after all. It's not sinful to entertain that sort of doubt. In a way, doubts are natural. What sort of doubts, do you think, are common or prevalent say, within the FWBO? To go no further than that. What sort of honest doubts do people have? Are they doctrinal or doubts about their own capacities, or doubts about Buddhist philosophy or doubts about Buddhism itself or about the efficacy of meditation or the particular practice they're doing? In what sort of area do doubts arise? Is there any sort of pattern? Are there any common doubts,t~~opular doubts?

The thing I find is, I find the time scale very hard to come to terms with, because when you read the Buddhist scriptures, you read about so many different lifetimes and numbers of years and so on; and I find it very difficult to know what I can achieve in my own lifetime, or even

this year or this month. Although I feel, well, I can achieve something, sometime, it's difficult to put a time scale on it.

S : Well, in a way Buddhism doesn't because it says, so to speak, well, look, there's thou-sands of lives. If you don't do it in this life, you'll do it in the next or~~~ future life. But of course, one shouldn't adopt that attitude too easily. And some people in Buddhist countries do. They think, well, why bother about Buddh,ism in this- life, I'll bother about it in some other life.

Eve : As regards doubt, I think one of the prevalent doubts that I've seen, both in myself and other people, is actually1~self-doubt, rather than~doctrinal doubt, because I feel, on the whole, although we do study, it quite often revolves around our livingiworking experience, like working in co-ops- or living in a community or whatever, but I see it more in terms of self~doubt.

S : So what does one mean by self-doubt? What does one doubt when one doubts oneself?

Eve : Well, that one can gain Enlightenment. S : Is it a simple lack of confidence or is it a doubt about

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S(ctd) Enlightenment itself, in the abstract, so to speak? Perhaps there's an element of that as well. Perhaps one isn't even very clear as to what Enlightenment really means. I think the basic thing is not so much that one shouldn't have doubts about Enlightenment, or doubt about one's own capacity to gain Enlightenment, but one shouldn't, as it were, fail to see that one does change, one does improve, one does grow. That's what it's really all about. I mean, the concept of Enlightenment is only extrapolation from that actual process. That you have changed, say, from what you were a year ago, two years ago. I mean, even if you don't see it very clearly yourself, I mean, other people perhaps can. Especially those who don't see you on a day to day basis. Each time they meet you, say, for a month, they'd see a definite change, a definite improvement. So one can conceive of this sort of, well, just going on and on and on until you've reached a comparatively advanced state. So perhaps it's more a question of just being convinced, well, just seeing, that that sort of process is going on. I mean, maybe Enlightenment can be left out of the picture because that's just the sort of hypothetical culmination of the process. But one has no reason to doubt that the process itself, I mean however modest it may be, however modest the gain, because you actually see it going on. Or even if you don't see it yourself very clearly, maybe some of your friends do. I mean, I notice if I don't see someone for three months, certainly for six months, I mean, let us say, within the FWBO, I quite often see a marked change. And you don't have to talk to the person. They don't need to say anything, you can just -see it from the way they loo~7the way they walk about. - You can see at once that a change has taken place, it's as obvious as that, if you just care to look and see. I mean, someone came to see me the other week and before he said anything, I knew he'd had some kind of experience, quite out of the ordinary. I knew it.

(end of side 1)

Another area where people have doubts S in karma and rebirth.

S : Well, there are maybe two things to be said here. If one has any doubts about karma and rebirth, well, one must go into the matter seriously, one must 'read about it~£ One must maybe read books about karma and rebirth. Cases of alleged ~collection of previous lives etc. etc. On the other hand one must realise that karma and rebirth provide a sort of framework for a more general understanding of sentient existence, human life, the process of spiritual development. But one can develop spiritually even without believing in karma and rebirth, but then of course, you have to concentrate your efforts on this- 'life' it's-elf. So it doesn't mean that if you don't believe in karma and rebirth you can't develop. That is not the case. But if you've got doubts, alright, bring them out into the open. Try to clear them up. It's not just a question of voicing them, it's also a question of clearing them

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S(ctd) : up. Study the literature on the subject. Think about it. Really try to find the answer, if there is an answer. Don't rest content with~ai your doubts. ~ring Vajragita : I want to ask about gaining Enlightenment and changing as a process. It doesn't mean

S : Doesn't?

Vajragita : I mean that takes such a long time. (I can't think of?) myself getting Enlightened in this life, but this is something quite different.

S : Well, this may well be the case. But if you. . . suppose you are convinced after exploring this whole question of karma and rebirth, that you've only got this one life and if you also want to gain Enlightenment, well, clearly you've got to do it in this life. You've got no alternative! You've sort of manoeuvred yourself into a corner! Perhaps it's not a bad thing to do. You've got to do it all in this life, in that case.

Liz : I find that there's one thing, I don't know that I'd sort of say it's a doubt, but I find working in a co-op and like, you're busy a lot of the time, and often there's times when you feel, well, you could actually spend more time on your own and it feels -

like there's a sort of, well, both things are necessary~ and it's knowing when it's right to say 'no' to one thing. It's not so much a doubt, it's just, I don't know, it's a constant sort of thing of how to resolve it. You can see the situation needs more and more, and yet you still have to, well, I've sort of accepted, I still need to give time to myself. Just do that.

S : Well, this doesn't seem to be so much a doubt about end~ as a doubt about 'means. Or rather, uncertainty about means. I mean, you're quite clear in your own mind, yes, working in a co-op is good, but' also you need some time to yourself. You are clear about 1,6th of these things. What you're not clear about, it's not exactly a doubt, but you're not clear how to arrange your life in such a way that you can meet both of these needs. So that you can do justice to both these needs. So it's, as I say, not so much a question of doubt, but you just don't see your way, practically speaking, to be able to do that. Well, not perhaps under present circumstances. In the abstract, so to speak, I mean, they are not difficult to

reconcile, but in the circumstances as they actually exist, they may be difficult to reconcile at any given time. So I wouldn't say that was a doubt in this sense.

Sulocana Doubt can, perhaps, arise when you see something, see things in a new way and the old way of seeing is then doubtful and one might be sort of in between.

S Yes, yes. Yes, you're unable really to shake off the old but not really able to grasp the new. You're not sure whether the old is, in fact, sort of outworn, let ~s s-ay, and therefore to be given up; and not quite

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S(ctd) : sure that the new truth that you've seen is really a new truth.

Sulocana : Yes, and the old has not become invalid, it's become different. Well, it's difficult.

S : Yes, this is, one might say this is more a sort of transitional state. But yes, the transitional state does involve, at least on the intellectual side, a certain amount of doubt, because you're not sure. You're not sure whether the old way of seeing things was correct or could be, perhaps, re-stated more satisfactorily and you're not sure whether the new way of seeing things is not, perhaps, completely right, so you ought to give up the old way of seeing things. You're not sure. You're not clear. There's doubt.

Liz : That reminds me of having a critical eye on something that you're doing; what Sulocana was saying suggests that you shouldn't continue blindly with one thing but appraise it as you go along and that could be experienced as a kind of doubt, the fact that you want to be critical.

S : I don't think that would amount to doubt in the sense of this text. It's more like a sort of appraising attitude. You just appraise things from time to time. You take a new look at them. You take a new look at them from time to time because you assume that you may well see things differently now, -SO it might be useful just to look at things afresh. Just to check whether you do in fact see them in the way that you used to see them. Alright, let's go on. Would someone like to read that second section?

Janet : "The Buddha said: "Those who, taking leave of their families and adopting the homeless life, know the nature of their minds and reach to what is fundamental, thus understanding the Teaching Beyond (Worldly) activity, are called Sramanas. They constantly observe the two hundred and fifty precepts, entering into and abiding in perfect quietude. By working their way through the four stages of progress, they become Arhans, who possess - the power~of levitation and transformation, as well as the ability to prolong their lives for many aeons and to reside or move about anywhere in heaven or earth. Below them come the Anagamins who, at the end of a long life, ascend in spirit to the nineteen heavens and become Arhats. Then come the Sakridagamins who must ascend one step and be reborn once more before becoming Arhans. There are also the Srota-apanas who cannot become Arhans until they have passed through nine more rounds of birth and death. One who has put an end to his longings and desires is like a man who, having no further use for his limbs (lit. having cut off

his limbs), never uses them "

again.

S : Mm. And so: "The Buddha said: "Those who, taking leave of their families and adopting the homeless life, know the nature of their minds" etc. Mm. "Adopting the homeless life". What exactly is meant by that? Should everybody adopt the

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S(ctd) : homeless life? What does it imply? What does it involve? In the Buddha's day, of course, many people did do this quite literally. People went forth. They took leave of their families. They adopted the homeless life. So the Theravada in particular, or the Hinayana we might say, attaches great importance to this. It tends to feel that unless you leave your family and adopt the homeless life you can't really follow the spiritual path. The Mahayana doesn't quite take that view. The Mahayana seems to take the view rather that taking leave of your family and adopting the homeless life is not necessarily something which you do externally, which you do, so to speak, literally. But, I mean, how do we feel about that? To what extent is a literal physical leaving of a family and taking up the homeless life necessary? What is the leading of the homeless life really? Can it be understood, so to speak, metaphorically? So how is one to take it? One needs to consider this very seriously.

Liz : It struck me when you started reading that these two monks wandered about with the scriptures; or that was how the scriptures travelled to China; that in the FWBO we set up centres, we're very much... in a way we stay in a situation for quite a while. We don't as individuals just travel on our own. So...

S : Well, some people do. I mean, not as a regular practice, so to speak, but from time to time and certainly in the course of their travels they meet people that they wouldn't otherwise have met. Maybe they talk to them about Buddhism, even teach them 'meditation. That does happen. I mean, in the current 'Shabda', that is to say the monthly newsletter of the Order, there were one or two accounts of people 'wandering' in India, where they just wandered by themselves and have met people that they wouldn't otherwise have met and they've put them in touch with Buddhism, put them in touch with the FWBO.

Noel . I was thinking about it a bit this morning and it occurred to me that although it isn't a tremendously practical thing for us' to do in this country, there's actually laws about wandering around and being homeless-,

S : Without visible means of support. Being a vagrant.

Noel : But perhaps going away on solitary retreats is sort of equivalent for us' because then you... we are sort of reducing your needs to the essential and you can actually

S : You're going away from the familiar. You're going away from the cosy, so to speak. And of course, you do the same thing~ to some extent at least, when you move to a foreign country and stay there for some time. You go out of your old familiar environment. One can, of course, meet people who've been born and brought up and been educated and married -and~had their own children and brought them up all within the same few hundred yards almost. Who've never gone out of that little area except, perhaps, for a very brief holiday. But what about permanently adopting a homeless life?

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S(ctd) : What would that mean, let's say for the sake of argument, in metaphorical terms?

° You wouldn't become attached to anything.

S . Mm. Yes. You don't become attached to anything. So what is the test that you're not attached to something? The real, practical test?

° You leave it.

S : You actually do leave it because people sometimes they say: "Oh, I'm not attached. I can give it up any time I like." But how can you know? How can you, not only how can others know, but how can you know yourself, without actually giving it up? So this is where the solitary retreat is very useful because then you can really take stock of - thing~ and assess your own actual feelings. Do you actually mind being away? Away from home, away from family, away from friends, familiar surroundings. Are you happy on your own? I mean, you really come up against it then, don't you, on a solitary retreat?

Eve : Doesn't it in our case as well, though, the whole () attitude. Like, I see the homeless life as actually being an attitude to actually keep changing, changing myself, so that I don't sort of settle down in this nice comfortable basis that I build up underneath me. And that, in a sense, to maintain that attitude is not an easy matter because the whole... well, one of the tendencies I feel in myself is that... is to, sort of, build up thTs security. So I see adopting the homeless life as one of adopting an attitude to actually keep changing.

S : Yes. Because one might ask the question, well, is it possible actually to be literally homeless? I mean, is it possible? I mean, one speaks of the homeless life, but alright, how literally is one to take it? Is it possible to be homeless? What does one mean then, by being homeless-? I mean, the monks who Went Forth in the Buddha's day, were they literally homeless?

° They got looked after quite well, didn't they?

S They got looked after quite well. I mean, even when they stayed under a tree, well,

you could say the tree was their home. I mean;~a tree can make a very nice home, a nice, big hollow trunk! tree, And in a warm climate.

S : And in a warm climate. Or a cave. It's still a home. It's not that you're literally without a home all the time, every minute. That would be rather difficult.

Sulocana : It's to do with thinking. Not being stuck to certain attitudes.

S : Yes, it's basically that, really.

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Elsie : Also, like, a home or a family can become a refuge and for a monk there's no refuge anywhere.

S : But again, of course, you can say home can take various forms. I mean, there are many monks in the East who have stayed in the same place, the same vihara for years, even decades, on end. It may be labelled a 'vihara', but it's much more like their home and they never leave it. One hears of, say, monks in the East; that is to say, young men, they become monks, they Go Forth from home. They live in the village. And what happens? I mean, they go a few hundred yards to the village vihara and they stay there instead of home and their mother brings them their meal every day! She's not only their mother, she's an 'upasika'. But there's not all that much difference, you might say, but technically that person has left his family, has Gone Forth, is leading a homeless life, is a monk - technically. So, you see what I'm getting at? One has to be really sure what does one mean by homeless life. And one might say that, well, in essence the homeless life means a life which consists in not settling down in any fixed mental attitude; which is always ready to grow, to move on, to move forward into the next situation. But that may well be reflected in, or even tested by, your actual moving into a new physical situation. But you should be very careful about labelling yourself as homeless because your home may have just changed its form. You may have settled down somewhere else and made that your home, your new home. So on the one hand, homelessness is essentially a matter of your mental attitude, but on the other hand it's not entirely unrelated to your actual physical surroundings or an actual movement out of your present physical surroundings. One must be very careful not to say it's all in the mind, it doesn't really matter if you stay at home because the mental, the change of mental attitude is important. No, it's not quite as simple as that, because if there is a real change of mental attitude, there is a likelihood, at least, that there will actually be a change of abode in the literal sense. An actual Going Forth. You may not do it every day, but at least from time to time!

Because it cannot... it can be counter-productive moving too much as well.

S : Yes, indeed. It must be a real Going Forth. That is to say, into something better. A moving forward into something more positive, not just an expression of restlessness or disorganisation. So, "Those who, taking leave of their families", oh, families, we haven't said anything about, "and adopting the homeless- life". Taking leave of one's families. Well,

should you take leave of your families to lead a spiritual life? What do you do about your family or families?

° You certainly have to leave them. You can't be their child in some way any 'more at all.

S : Yes. You have to leave them psychologically, emancipating yourself psychologically to begin with. But I mean, maybe you don't have to cut off connection completely.

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S(ctd) : Maybe you do for a short while, just to achieve the psychological emancipation, depending on how mothered and smothered you have been.

Seems () having to do it as well.

S : Mm. It ~s sometimes quite difficult for parents to see their children, their grown-up children as actually adults, mature people able to look after themselves. So, "Those who, taking leave of their families and adopting the homeless life, know the nature of their minds and reach to what is fundamental, thus understanding the Teaching Beyond (Worldly) activity, are called Sramanas ", A 'sramana' is equal to 'bhikkhu' in Buddhist terminology. A 'sramana' literally means one who is washed, one who is pure. Just as 'bhikkhu' means one who lives upon alms. So the 'sramana' or the 'bhikkhu' is one who has Gone Forth, who has adopted the homeless life in the literal sense. But the Buddha is saying that such people "know the nature of their minds". What do you think is meant by knowing the nature of one's mind? Perhaps I should just mention something here, which is that it is believed that this text, this 'Sutra of 42 Sections', was at some stage, as it were, edited by Ch'an followers, Ch'an monks, who introduced little sort of Ch'an or Zen touches here and there. This may be one of them. It hasn't got a quite sort of Theravada or Hinayana °Buddhist ring to it, knowing the nature of the mind. So what does one mean? Knowing the nature of the mind and reaching what is fundamental. Alright, knowing the nature of the mind first. Do you think it means just the individual mind?

° The ~~~~ S : Human mind. Just that? ° The footnote gives it away.

S : Well, does it? Well no, it only says; "A Mahayana Buddhist would interpret this as meaning that they realised that their minds were one with the 'Dharma- kaya', the highest of the three bodies of a Buddha, which is synonymous with the ultimate reality underlying all form, and that all the attributes which made them appear as independent personalities were hollow and false. As this was originally a Hinayana sutra, it may once have been interpreted differently." No, this sounds a bit too easy, as it were. Knowing the nature of their mind. Let's go step by step. What would it -mean in an ordinary, every day, common sense sort of way, knowing the nature of the mind?

° Awareness.

S : Awareness. It's knowing what one's reactions were. Knowing what mental states were present. Understanding how you function mentally and emotionally.

Elsie : It's knowing your 'moods.

S : Knowing your moods. Yes. But going further than that,

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S(ctd) : what would it mean? Knowing the nature of the mind.

Liz . You can see the mind acting reactively or being more open, less fixed or more creative.

S : Yes. And you could come to be able to distinguish between the two; and then, in more Mahayana terms, one could come to see that the more creative functioning of the mind was, in a way, more truly you than the reactive. So, in this way, "reach to what is fundamental", the fundamental being, presumably, the transcendental. In other words, the upper reaches of the purely creative as distinct from reactive process. "Thus understanding the Teaching Beyond (Worldly) activity", the teaching beyond the reactive mind. The teaching beyond the 'samsara'. And these "are called sramanas." So, it's quite interesting that here the Buddha gives, so to speak, a sort of definition of the 'sramana' or the 'bhikkhu'. He says they're those who take leave of their families, adopt the homeless life, know the nature of their minds, reach to the fundamental and understand the teaching beyond worldly activity. And then he says: "They constantly observe the two hundred and fifty precepts". Why 250? Any reason for that?

° Is that the number of precepts for the bhikkhu~?

S : That's the number of precepts for a bhikkhu-, in which tradition?

° In Theravada".

S . No, in Theravada it's 227! It's 250 in the Sarvastivada school which is another Hinayana school which was very prominent.

° And aren't there more for women?

S : I'm afraid there are more for women! Women are usually stricter anyway. "Entering into and abiding in perfect quietude". Again, there is this term 'quietude'. It's something more like tranquillity, equanimity. The 250 precepts refers to external behaviour, one could say, and the perfect quietude, tranquillity, contentment, refers to mental states. But what about this observing 250 precepts or more? The bhikkhunis - the Sarvastivada, the bhikkhunis, that is to say the nuns, have got more than 300 precepts to observe. So how does one think of this? Do you think it's a good thing to have so many precepts to observe? Do you think it's a question of the more precepts the better? Perhaps there should be 250,000 -

300,000 for the bhikkhunis

Sulocana : () there's ways of behaving. I mean surely, when those people are like that, they couldn't behave otherwise.

tjlc ~ ~ ~ S : Yes, right. In a way, / an arbitrary number because what happens? #ean, how do you came to lay down a

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S(ctd) : precept? Well, in the first place, for instance, you've got, say, someone who is Enlightened and you notice he behaves in a certain way. Doesn't do this, doesn't do that. Does this, does that. So in that way you could draw up a list of all the hundreds of different ways in which an Enlightened person behaves. You could list a~~ the things he or she does. All the things he or she doesn't do. And then you could say, well, the unenlightened person should behave like that. And then that results in a sort of list of precepts for the unenlightened person. Do you see what I mean? But you could go on endlessly. You could have a list of several hundred, several thousand, precepts, but is that really the best way to think of the spiritual life, do you think?

Liz : It's a bit rigid, isn't it?

S : It's a bit rigid. It's a bit external. No doubt the Enlightened person, by his life, provides some general guidelines, but one has to be very careful to distinguish real guidelines from just accidental circumstances. There's a little story I used to tell. I don't know whether you've heard it. Perhaps some of you have. It must be on tape. About the guru who had a kitten. The guru who had a kitten. No? You haven't heard this one? I'd better tell it then! I bet some of you recognise it when I start telling it. Well, what happened was; there was a certain guru who had a lot of disciples, and one day somebody gave the guru a small kitten as a present. So, the guru spent some time playing with this kitten, then it came to be time for meditation. So while the guru was meditating the kitten kept trying to get into his lap. So the guru eventually took the kitten and tied some string round its neck, put a big post in the ground and tied the kitten to that. So then the guru was able to get on with his meditation. So he did this in fact every day. Whenever the time came for his meditation, he just tied the kitten to the post. So, some of his disciples noticed this, so they saw that every time the guru was about to meditate, he tied the kitten to the post. So they thought this must have something to do with his 'meditation! It must have some esoteric significance; well, it helps his meditation! So they all went to the bazaar and bought kittens and before they started to meditate they tied the kittens to the post, hoping that that would help them with their meditation. So, I mean, when the guru tied his kitten to the post, well, yes, this was an aspect of his behaviour, but it didn't constitute a precept. It was j us-t an accident. So one needs' to distinguish what is r'eally an expression of somebody?s enlightened nature, so to speak, and what is just a product of historical circumstances and cultural conditions. And probably, if one is not to get confused, it, s better just to lay down certain broad, general principles and certain quite simple basic precepts. So this is why, in the FWBO or in the Western Buddhist

Order, we have just the ten silas for all 'upasikas' and 'upasakas' . The ten 'kusala dharmas' , everything is

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S(ctd) : really contained there. But if you start laying down detailed regulations about the size and shape of robes and what headgear and length of hair and all the rest of it, there's really no end and you can just become lost in things of second~ary importance and think that you are, say, a bhik~u or a sramana simply because you keep up certain eternal things, when maybe you're - neglecting things of basic importance. I mean, I myself have seen plenty of bhikkhus in the East who are very particular about shaving their heads and all the rest of it, but who are not really concerned with the Dharma at all. So, I mean, that is the important thing, to be concerned with the Dharma and really to try to practise it. Not to sort of keep up a sort of resemblance to some other, admittedly Enlightened, person's external behaviour, without being anywhere near them in spirit. Alright, then: "By working their way through the four stages of p~ress, they become Arhans," an 'arhan' is a disciple of the Buddha who has gained complete Enlightenment, "who possess the powers of levitation and transformation, as well as the ability to prolong their lives for many aeons and to reside or move about anywhere in heaven or earth." This seems to me - a bit of a concession to Chinese culture. The Chinese had figures called the Taoist Immortals. Have you heard of them? I forget what they are called in Chinese, but in English they are called the Immortals, with a capital 'I' and they are believed to be able to fly about anywhere they wish, to levitate and all the rest of it. Well, these things' are referred to in the Pali texts, but they are not given the sort of importance that this passage seems to give them, -because these are mundane supernormal powers. You -c-an possess these powers without being an arahant And you can be an arahant without possessing these powers. It's as though the arahant is being presented in terms of the Chinese Taoist Immortal. Usually the arahant is defined in terms of having broken certain fetters or being free from certain unskillful mental states, of possessing a certain kind of higher knowledge; but not simply in terms of possessing powers of levitation and transformation etc. These are quite secondary things which don~t really characterise the arahant at all. Which he may or may not have. So one can say that perhaps the translators selected these particular features' so that the Chinese reader could at least recognise something with which he was familiar, something which he venerated, that is to say the figure of the Taoist Immortal, who had these wonderful powers and was, therefore, believed to be very highly developed. "Below them come the Anagamins who, at the end of a long life, ascend in spirit to the nineteen heavens and become Arhats." The teaching actually is that the ?anagami,~? or the non-returner, is one who, at the time of death is- reborn into a higher world. Is reborn usually, it is said, in the ('Suddhavasa')~ Pure Abodes, at the summit of the Rupaloka , the world of Pure Form or Archetypal Form, and he gains pure Enlightenment from there, without coming back to this earth.

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S(ctd) : And: "Then come the Sakridagamins," that is to say that means the Once Returners, "who must ascend one step and be reborn once more before becoming Arhans." In these persons, at the time of death, they are very near Enlightenment. There is very little karma left. They come back just once and then they gain Enlightenment as - arahants . This is all standard Hinayana, Theravada teaching. "There are also the Srota-apanas who cannot become Arhans until they have passed through nine more rounds of birth and death." I don't

know why this text says nine. Pali sources always speak of seven more rounds of birth and death. Seven more births, not more. It may be less but it won't be more. In other words they've a very limited stock of karma left. So, "One who has put an end to his longings and desires that is to say, who is an arahant~"is like a man who, having no further use for his limbs (lit. having cut off his limbs), never uses them again." This isn't really a very inspiring comparison! I mean, is it? This is found in one of the Pali sut~as actually, I remember that. But one has to take the spirit of the comparison. It's not so much like having no further use for one's limbs and never using them again, it's almost as though you've got an extra, unnecessary limb. Well, it's almost as though you've got a tail and then the tail drops off and you really are a human being. It's more like that. Otherwise it suggests that the arahant is a sort of cripple and has got his arms and legs cut off. That's not the real meaning at all. Or maybe one should think in terms of sprouting wings, gaining fresh limbs, rather than losing the ones you've already got.

Why is the word 'arhan~' used three times and 'ar~ha~t' used once? Is there any significance?

S : Not really, no. This is just the translator. They both have the same meaning. 'Arahant' is usually described, interpreted, as meaning one who has destroyed his enemies. The cncmics being the passions or~~~ar~ One who has destroyed all unskilful states. That's essentially what 'arahant' means.

this is a very standard list that is to say, the arahant and so on. It figures very prominently in the Hinayana teaching, including the Theravada teaching. It's a little doubtful whether the Buddha himself actually taught this fourfold scheme, but nonetheless it's not inconsistent with the Buddha's teaching because it is a sort of progressive scheme. It gives the idea of gradual progression further and further along the Path, ~ere the Transcendental Path, because the Stream Entrant is one who has entered upon the Transcendental Path in the sense of the path of permanently irreversible creativity.

(end of tape one)

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Noel . Bhante, you said just now that you thought that these stages of progression wouldn't actually have been laid down by the Buddha himself. Could you say how they might have evolved?

S : Ah! We have to be a bit cautious about making these sort of statements, but nonetheless it does seem that one can distinguish, say, in the Pali Canon, material belonging to different levels. Well, it is quite clear, in fact, that in the case of the Pali Canon, which consists of, say, about 45 volumes of material, some of it belongs to an earlier and some to a later

period. I think that is pretty clear. In the broadest sense, for instance, the first four Nikayas of the 'Sutta-Pitaka', together with a few individual works from the fifth Nikaya, the K/iu~ta~a are earlier, say, than the seven books of the 'Abhidharma-Pitaka'. I think modern scholars are unanimous that the 'Abhidharma-Pitaka' could certainly not have been the work of the Buddha. The 'Abhidharma-Pitaka' was evolved later. And then again, even in the 'Sutta-Pitaka' itself-I mean, I mentioned theK~~aka-Nikaya~ theK~~~daka-Nik~ya contains fourteen separate works; some of those works are quite early, like the 'Udana' or like the 'Sutta-Nipata'; others are late, like the 'Jataka' book, well, certainly the stories of the 'Jataka' book, as distinct from the verses, which are not attributed to the Buddha anyway. Even if you take the 'Sutta-Nipata', there are two out of the five sections or chapters of that, which seem clearly much earlier than the other two, for various reasons. They - are the Atthakav,i~ga and the Para~~naV~~ga ° So e within the Pali Canon one can distinguish earlier~an~ later material. So therefore, one can also distinguish earlier teachings and later teachings. Teachings which can be attributed to the Buddha with some certainty and other teachings which probably can't be attributed to the Buddha. Some- times one can see a teaching growing and developing from an earlier to a later stage. Do you see what I mean? But of course it isn't always very clear, isn't always very easy to say, well, this is definitely earlier, that is definitely later. The Buddha definitely taught that,~'&C he couldn't have taught that. Well, there are some cases in which it~s clear, but there are others in which it is not so clear. You can~t be so sure. But with regard to this particular scheme of four or eight holy persons, it seem\$, as far as we can tell, that the Buddha originally spoke in terms of £going upstream. You went upstream when you made that transition from the, what I've called the reversibly creative to the irreversibly creative. So the point at which you go up- stream is the point at what was afterwards called Stream Entry. And when you've sort of gone the whole way, well, then you're an arahant ; when you've gained, so to speak, full Enlightenment. So there's first of all the idea of going upstream, then there's the distinction of the person who has gone upstream, and the person who has gone -all the way up- stream, so to speak, and who is now fully Enlightened. So you've got two, the Stream Entrant and the Arahant

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S(ctd) : So, having got those two, you could then interpolate the others. And then, in that way, the doctrine or teaching is still further developed. Then each of those four is sub-divided into two according to what is called path and fruit. Well, very much later on, centuries after the time of the Buddha, Buddhist thinkers started distinguishing several hundred kinds of Stream Entrants and several hundred kinds of Once-Returners and so on. Well, clearly that is, so to speak, a scholastic elaboration. So it is for this reason I said that it is very likely that this four-fold scheme does not actually go back to the Buddha. We can't be absolutely certain about that, but there is a possibility that it doesn't. But certainly the concept

of Stream Entry goes back to the Buddha. Certainly the concept of Arahantship, full Enlightenment, goes back to the Buddha. The Buddha may not always have put things quite in the cut and dried form in which ~hey've come down to us. He may have put things differently at different times, under different circumstances. We mustn't think of him as necessarily having a fixed, rigid, well worked-out system of teaching. The Buddha responded to whoever was in front of him. Whoever he was talking to. Whoever he was communicating with according to their needs. He said what was necessary. He didn't have a sort of preconceived doctrinal scheme which he expounded wherever he went. We mustn't think of him operating in that sort of way. Though the scriptures sometimes give that sort of impression. But what seem to be the oldest portions of the scriptures don't give that impression at all and that is significant.

Noel : - He does, however, use the imagery of water~~jtc ~ Io~?,- I was just thinking of the image of the raft.

S : Yes. It could be that what we call the parables of the Buddha occupy a more important place in his teaching than one would think. It does seem to me that many of the parables go back to the Buddha because it's not easy to create a parable. You have to have a sort of, well, almost creative gift. You have to be a bit of a genius to create really good parables and there are a lot of them in the Pali scriptures, so I'm inclined to think that certainly the best of them go back to the Buddha himself. Because some of them make a really original point. I mean, like the parable of the blind men and the elephant, the parable of the raft, the parable of the raincloud in the 'Saddharma Pundarika Sutra'. I think it's probably more likely that the best of the parables go back to the Buddha himself than some of the more elaborate doctrinal teachings. We usually think of the Buddha as very heavily doctrinal, but it's because we're - seeing the Buddha through the veil, so to speak, of later presentations of the teaching. The Buddha was probably himself much more direct, much less doctrinal, much less intellectual. One does get that impression, reading some of these very early works, like parts of the 'Udana' and the 'Sutta Nipata'. I mean the Buddha didn't always give a long discourse under all sorts of numbered headings. Point one, point

S of 42 S DI T2 3 25 S(ctd) : two, point three! He didn't always do that, surely?

~ts : Bhante, in the Buddha's day, was the idea of karma and rebirth present in the culture?

S : It seems to have been. The Buddha seems able, judging from many suttas, to take it for granted in his audience. But it does seem to have been a comparatively late development. For instance, you must have heard of the 'Upanishads'. These are Hindu works, many of which came into existence before the time of the Buddha. They're connected with, even affiliated to, Vedic literature. The teaching of karma is only referred to in just a very few places in these works. And referred to as a quite esoteric teaching. But by the Buddha's time, that teaching seems to have become quite widespread. That must have happened within a period of just two or three hundred years. The teaching of karma and rebirth is not found in

the 'Vedas', in the strict sense, that is to say the 'Rig Veda' especially. There is no reference to karma and rebirth. These other works, the 'Upanishads' are sort of attached, or traditionally regarded as being attached, to the 'Vedas', as belonging to that body of literature. The 'Vedas' had attached works called the - 'Brahmanas' (?) which were sort of ritualistic works, and there are 'Ar~nyikas' (?) attached to those works which sort of explain the meaning, the inner significance of the ritual. And then, attached to the --'Ar,inyikas' - , or as parts of the 'Ar&nyikas' are the 'Upanishads' which are almost, well, in some cases almost exclusively philosophical or sort of philosophical, ~ ~onic. c~~e~ not especially L*¹⁰ the case of the old 'Upanishads', Brihadaranyaka and Chando 9~ya. But even in these 'Upanishads'~ and even in the most philosophical of them which precede the time of the Buddha, karma is just touched upon. It's just barely mentioned and then as an esoteric teaching. So these older 'Upanishads' probably go back to about 800, even 900BC; the Buddha belongs to, let's say, 600 or 500BC. So it does seem as though h~j~p~~te~a~c,,hJ~~~~ a~b~~t ~arma a rebirth b"e%Pa'flrt?e~eo~~~~rra ly wi e prea ~over A p~~~0W two to three hundred years. That seems quite understandable because one might say that in the West, in the modern West, the idea of karma and rebirth has become more widespread in recent years, say in this century, not that it was completely unknown before. I mean, people are quite familiar with the idea now; even references to it on the radio and TV. So that's taken about one hundred years, even with modern means of communication, so it's not surprising that, well, the teaching could have come to be more widely circulated in ancient India, say within the period of two to three hundred years.

What's the basis of the caste system? Because I thought that rebirth was maybe the basis of the caste system. Or whether....

S : No! The original basis, as contained in the 'Vedas', is sort of mythic. There is a passage in the 'Rig Veda' of what is called a sort of hymn, if you like, the - 'P~P~sha Sukta-(?) the hymn of the archetypal man.

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S(ctd) : In many mythologies there is a sort of archetypal man. Are you familiar with this idea? And the whole of the universe is produced by way of the dismemberment of - this universal man or even the different living beings are produced from different parts of the universal man. You get something of this sort in the 'Rig Veda'. There is the description of the ~r~S~a, the universal man, the archetypal man or the Adam Kadmon as it were. And the Brahmins are described as originating from his head, &~~~shatriyas from his shoulder or from his arms, the Vai~as from his thighs and the Sjudras, the fourth from his feet. So this is the explanation in the 'Rig Veda'. Some say t~is is a late chapter or a late hymn, this

Pur~~a S~~iikta , but anyway it is there in the 'Rig Veda' and that is really the sort of scriptural basis, ~r the ultimate scriptural basis, for the Hindu belief in the divine origin of the caste system. The connection of the caste system with the teaching of karma and rebirth came later and provided a further justification. Alright, let's go on. Section three. Would anyone like to read that?

"The Sramana who, having left home, puts an end to his desires and drives away his longings,

knowing the source of his own mind, penetrates to the profound principles of Buddhahood. He awakes to the non-phenomenal, clinging to nothing within and seeking for nothing from without. His mind is not shackled with dogmas, nor is he enmeshed by karma. Pondering nothing and doing nothing, practising nothing and manifesting nothing, without passing through all the successive stages, he (nevertheless) reaches the loftiest of all. This is what is meant by "The Way."

S : Mm. Well, what are we to make of that? "The Sramana who, having left home, puts an end to his desires," we talked about desire earlier on, didn't we? It's really craving rather than desires. "and drives away his longings," what do you think is -meant by 'longings' here as distinct from desires in the sense of cravings? Longings - when do you long for something?

Perhaps it's a recollection of something pleasant.

S : Mm, yes, mm. Maybe longing is the sort of craving you have for something you don't actually possess. Something that you're not actually in possession of at the moment but to which you are addicted. When you might be addicted to smoking and, well, when you haven't got any cigarettes and can't get any, you're just longing for a - cigarette. Perhaps it's something like that. "by knowing the source of his own mind," now this is very important. I think there's another Zen-like touch here. "knowing the source of his own mind". So, what sort of mind is this here? Is it the m~dane -mind or the transcendental mind, so to speak, do you think?

Transcendental.

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S Well, how is that possible? How can the transcendental mind have a source?

No.

S : No. If it's transcendental, it hasn't got a source; if it's got a source, it isn't transcendental. So it can only be the mundane mind, eh? So what is the source of the mundane mind, could you say?

° Evil? S : Hm? ° Evil No. ° Duality or delusion.

S : Well, could you say that's the source, or is it that.... the source means, well, it's something that comes before. Do you have a sort of abstract duality first and then the mundane mind? What do you have before, so to speak, the mundane mind? What could you say you had first that was the source of the mundane mind?

° Fixed ideas? S . No, that's what the mundane mind would have anyway. ° Ignorance?

S Well, isn't that another name for the mundane mind? What's the source of ignorance?

() exaggeration. (1~

° Past karma, past karma.

Birth, I suppose.

° () desires.

S : But are they really separable from the mundane mind? I mean, do , say, unskilful mental states exist apart from the mind itself, the mundane mind

° No.

S : No. So there's only one possible source, in a manner of speaking, u~sing the word 'source' in inverted commas, of th~undane mind~ and that's the transcendental mind. But how come? Is it.... when you say that the transcendental mind is the 'source' of mundane mind, what do you mean? Do you mean that there was the transcendental mind going along from eternity to eternity and it suddenly gave birth to the mundane mind for no apparent reason? Does one mean that? Well, no, one doesn't. Not in Buddhism. So, what does one mean by speaking of the source of the mundane mind, hm? Does it mean going back to a point in time at which the mundane mind originated out of, say, the transcendental mind? Does it mean that? No. So what does it mean?

S of 42 5 DI T2 6 28 It's inspiration.

S : Yes, one could say that. But, alright, let's just sort of think of it, hm? You've got the mundane mind. You've got the subject, the experiencing subject; and you've got the object, the experienced object. I mean, that's the present framework, isn't it? That's the framework within which you operate. So what... if you want to get, so to speak, to the transcendental mind, what have you got to do?

You've got to get out from the framework.

S : Yes~ you've got to get out. You've got to get back, as it were, to the point at which it begins. Not at which it began, aeons and aeons ago, but at which it begins at every instant, hm? You've got to find that point where the split oc~rS~ and at that point you'll find the transcendental. When you discover the point of origination of that split, of the mundane mind itself, at the same time you will discover the transcendental mind. But there's no sort of cut and dried way of doing that, because it's as though, in order to see the point of origin of the mundane mind, of the whole sort of dualistic framework, dualistic structure, you~d have to get outside it;

you'd have to posit, as it were, another subject looking at that subject and that object. But is that possible? Well, no, of course it isn't! So you're left with a sort of koan! You can only sort of formulate the koan and just sort of live with it and work with it. And if you experience it with sufficient intensity, well, yes, then you will see, you will find, the source of the mundane mind and at the same time you'll find the transcendental mind. But there's anyway no way of doing that. This is why, perhaps, well, one can speak of following successive stages, but that doesn't really do the trick. "Pondering nothing and doing nothing, practising nothing and manifesting nothing, without passing through all the successive stages, he (nevertheless) reaches the loftiest of all. This is what is meant by "The Way". You could say, in a manner of speaking, that it isn't a question of just modifying bit by bit, stage by stage, step by step, the mundane mind. At some point there has to be a break, as it were, a breakthrough and that's the point, that represents the source of one's own mind. And when one finds the source of one's own mind, one finds at the same time the transcendental mind. But there's not a regular step-by-step approach to this. Here we've got a bit of Zen, of course. Do you see what I mean? You're left with a koan to work with. You're not left with an intelligible solution which you can understand just theoretically. So there's really no point in saying anything more about it! So, "The Sramana who, having left home, puts an end to his desires and drives away his longings, knowing the source of his own mind, penetrates to the profound principles of Buddhahood." That is to the Transcendental, to the Unconditioned. "He awakes to the non-phenomenal," he awakes, like a waking up out of dream, out of sleep. It's a different dimension, a different level, -

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5(ctd) : a different state. "He awakes to the non-phenomenal, clinging to nothing within and seeking for nothing from without." That suggests that he has transcended the subject-object duality. "His mind is not shackled with dogmas, nor is he enmeshed by karma." On the theoretical side, to speak, his mind is not shackled with dogmas, but concepts and dogmas all pertain to or belong to the rigid, subject-object, dualistic sort of framework. He's freed from that. nor is he enmeshed by karma. Well, there's no ego, there's no separate self; no subject as distinct from object there any longer. So, there's no karma because there's nobody that karma can apply to, nobody to create karma. So, "Pondering nothing and doing nothing, practising nothing and manifesting nothing"... I mean, is one to take this literally?

No.

S : It isn't that one just tries to stop thinking or tries to stop doing it. This refers to the spontaneous activity of someone who is Enlightened. He's not pondering anything in the dualistic sense. He's not pondering anything because there's nothing separate from himself for him to think about. He doesn't discriminate subject and object. And not doing anything, he doesn't have to, think; it's a spontaneous, compassionate activity. practising nothing and manifesting nothing"... well, nothing in particular to practise because he's reached the goal, so to speak, nothing to show. "without passing through all the

successive stages"... because the successive stages themselves are only a product of the dualistic mind... "he (nevertheless) reaches the loftiest of all"... he reaches by not reaching, in - - - the paradoxical language of the 'Prajnaparamita'. "This is what is meant by 'The Way This is what is meant by the Dharma. This is very much the Zen approach. But what is there here which is useful to us? One might think, well, this is alright for Zen monks, sitting in monasteries, working for 20 hours of the day out of 24 on their koans for 30 years on end, but what about us? I mean, what use is this to us? It's a reminder to us that we think about the transcendental in terms of the mundane, that we even think about the spiritual path in what are really quite mundane terms. We mustn't take those terms too literally. We must try to get the feeling of the thing, try to catch the real spirit, not just be misled by the letter. It's easier to think of steps and stages and a literal path and a literal goal, but is it really like that? That's what we are to ask ourselves. Use these expressions, by all means, but don't be taken in by them, don't take them too literally.

But we do have to work with mundane conditions though, don't we, in practical terms?

S Yes, we have to work with mundane conditions, but we have to work with them in such a way that we go beyond the mundane conditions and we can go beyond, or even work

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5(ctd) : with, the mundane conditions only if we, so to speak, don't take them too literally. That is to say, we don't take too literally the mundane terms with which we are trying to express something beyond the mundane.

: I feel within myself sometimes that the mundane conditions that we are talking about, which is me basically, sets up a sort of tension. Like, I can feel a certain tension that builds up and builds up and it hasn't resolved itself yet, but that's the way that I'm... that in a way that I can relate to that. That there's like this tension that the only resolve for this tension is actually transcendental insight.

5 : Yes, some sort of breakthrough on some other level or some other plane, into some other dimension. There's no solution on the level of the problem itself. Quite, yes. Well, like just in a purely ordinary sense, on the mundane level, so to speak, well, there are some things, say, when you are very young, that you solve just by growing out or by growing up. It happens sort of automatically. But on the spiritual level, so to speak, it's not a question of just growing up, I mean in the sense of just waiting for an automatic process to fulfil itself. It's a question of building up intensity and using that intensity to breakthrough.

I mean, sometimes I've said that most people, or for most people, spiritual progress proceeds in two different ways. There's usually a sort of slow and steady - or slow anyway, sometimes not so steady - sort of build-up. You just sort of plod on. You just sort of slog away at it for a few months, even for a few years. But then there's a sort of sudden breakthrough, not a complete breakthrough, not a breakthrough right into the transcendental, but a definite breakthrough. And then then again you plod on. You sort of consolidate on that new level. And then again, after another breakthrough, maybe in connection with a retreat or something that you've read, or it just happens. That seems to be the way that most people's spiritual life proceeds, well, talking about people in the Friends. Perhaps

it's true outside as well. Has anybody noticed this sort of thing? Or do you find that you have a whole series of breakthroughs, one after another? It is, yes, it is sort of a long, slow, fairly steady building up process and then a bit of a breakthrough, then again another long, slow~ steady build up, again another sort of breakthrough. It seems to happen like that with quite a lot of people.

: That seems to be one of the reasons it's really worth- while returning to your perspective, because particularly in those long, slow patches, sometimes it seems like you're going backwards rather than forwards.

S : Yes, yes. So, "His mind is not shackled with dogmas . . . what does one mean by the expression ~dogma~? I mean, just take it in its ordinary sense in English. What's a 'dogma'? It's a fixed idea. You say someone is being very dogmatic. You mean he's rather forcibly irrational fixed ideas.

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The result of something that is not a personal insight but a

S : Yes, it may be you've appropriated something, maybe just the words, just the ideas, without really grasping the underlying spirit. You are just, so to speak, putting that forward, not in a way that the dogma itself as such - if you can put it that way - is untrue, but you're sort of appropriating it and using it in a certain kind of way. You can be- dogmatic about the Four Noble Truths, for instance. It doesn't mean the Four Noble Truths are wrong but you've just seized the intellectual framework and you're pushing that without much really understanding what the Four Noble Truths are all about.

Elsie : In that passage that means you're taking it sort of literally and you're taking it as an end in itself, rather than seeing it as a means.

S : Yes, quite, yes. ~ou're not using the raft to cross over, you're anchoring it, so to speak, on this shore and trying to build a house on it. Well, some people want a house-boat or house-raft rather than ~ust a raft!

It's as though that sort of dogma would tie your mind down because (you wouldn't experience?) you can't actually use it for creative purposes.

S : Yes. So you're literally "shackled with dogma". But do you actually notice yourselves doing this sometimes? Becoming shackled by dogm~ Do you?

Mm, y e s, y e s.

S . It does mean one has to give up the dogma. You give it up as dogma. In other words, you change your attitude towards that particular teaching if it does happen, in fact, to be a true teaching.

: It demands quite a lot of effort to sort of keep yourself not sort of fixing ideas and things. That's, that's.... I mean, I find friends and other people around help, looking from that point of view because I know that personally I can fix things quite quickly and had these other people.... it's as if you're saying these things and, like, they're soon picked up on and I find that very useful actually.

S : Yes, well, it is sometimes quite irritating to live or work with someone who's a bit dogmatic. I mean, Dr. Johnson I think, once made the remark: "How dreadful it would be to be married to someone who was always dwelling upon the Arj--an ~eresy." One does notice that with people sometimes, they're sort of a bit mono-ideistic, they just dwell on one particular idea and they are sort of obsessed by that.

° How can we get away from that? ~t A~s S : Well, as~suggested, it's helpful to have friends who challenge on~~s fixed or one's rigid ideas. - Some- times life i~~~I~ challenges your ideas and gives you

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S(ctd) : a shake-up. But perhaps friends can do it in a some- what more pleasant and constructive way. I mean, what is really dreadful, is when you get into a group with other people and you just reinforce one ~noth~~' s dogmatism. I mean, if one wanted to be a bit hard on Christianity, one could say the Christian churches are just organisations for mutual reinforcement of dogmatism. That's probably a bit hard but tner' s some, well, quite a lot, of truth in that. It would be better if one challenged one another's fixed ideas. You're not challenging so much the idea, but the fixity of someone's attitude towards it, or the way in which he uses it or doesn't use it properly. I mean, the way in which some Buddhists go on about some perfectly valid Buddhist teaching is sometimes of this nature. Just become very dogmatic about (Lt) and they are always trying to hit you over the head with the doctrine of 'anatta' or something like that.

~~avaC : I find with the Dharma that if I'm putting something into practice, I'm less dogmatic about it. Tt's only when I'm not actually practising it or experiencing it that I tend to get quite dogmatic.

5 : Well, this is why it's quite interesting to, as a sort of exercise in self-knowledge, just to ask oneself whether there is a particular aspect of the Dharma or the spiritual life or whatever that you're always harping upon! It could tell you quite a lot about yourself. Some people are always harping upon ~m~~ta~, or some people are always harping upon open-mindedness or receptivity. So perhaps you should ask yourself, well, why am I always harping on this particular topic? Is it because I am practising it such a lot or is it perhaps for some other reason? Is my harping upon it a bit sort of compensatory? I think that'£- ~'4h~~ PtA~~~~otj ~~~s getting at.

Yes. I expect they'll be watching me now!

5 : Again, to mention about Christianity - I'm sorry to keep bringing in Christianity, but it seems to provide quite good examples - but what is it that Christianity harps upon more

than any other religion perhaps? Certainly more than Buddhists do. It's always harping upon love. But does it really, or has it really in the course of history apparently shown very much love? It's accusing the Buddhists - I mean Christians are sometimes fond of accusing Buddhists of being cold and selfish and lacking in love, but the Buddhists haven't done the amount of damage that these love-filled Christians have done in the course of its history. So maybe one can apply this principle on an even wider scale. I mean, what is it that Hindus are always harping on? Tolerance, tolerance. You'd think that they were therefore very tolerant, but no, not a bit of it. They like to think that they are but no, they are in some ways the least tolerant. They insist that you believe exactly what they believe. They don't allow you to believe what you in fact believe, and they regard

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S(ctd) : that as being very tolerant, insisting that your belief means exactly the same as their belief and not allowing you to have a sort of different meaning or an independent meaning. Trying to get everybody under the same great big religious umbrella - their umbrella - they regard as a sort of tolerance. But what are Buddhists always harping on, do you think?

Insight, insight!

S : Let's come to that What are Buddhists always harping on about, do you think?

Ideals, ideal societies.

Freedom.

5 : Buddhists, I mean traditional Buddhists, I'm thinking of more in the East. Is there anything that they're always harping upon in the way that Christians always harp on love and Hindus harp on tolerance?

Non-violence?

5 : Non-violence? You could say the Jains harp on non-violence rather than the Buddhists. But what do...? Maybe we are too near to Buddhism to be able to say. Perhaps we should ask a Christian or a Moslem, he'd probably tell us quite quickly what we always seem to be harping on. I know what Buddhists are always harping on. They are always harping on no-self.

Yes. Oh, yes!

Impermanence.

S : Selflessness, harping on it. Well, it's a bit of a contradiction in terms, isn't it? Alright, let's get on a bit. Shall we come to the fourth section?

"The Buddha said: "He who has shorn his locks and beard to become a gramana and has accepted the Doctrine of the Way, abandons everything of worldly value and is satisfied by the food he obtains by begging, eating but once a day. If there is a tree under which to rest, he desires nothing else. Longings and desires are what make men stupid and darken their minds."

S : And here what the Buddha is speaking of is one who has literally Gone Forth, so: "shorn his locks and beard to become a Sramana and has accepted the Doctrine of the Way." Who has abandoned "everything of worldly value," like possessions, reputation, comfort, relations, wealth, property, "and is satisfied by the food he obtains by begging, eating but once a day. If there is a tree under which to rest, he desires nothing else. Longings and desires are what make men stupid and darken their ~~~~~~ So what is really, do you think, the principle that is being insisted upon here? What sort of life?

Simple.

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5 . The simple life. It's really apt, the simple life. What's the opposite of a simple life, would you say?

Where you are seeking things all the time. Enjoyments or possessions.

S : Hm. The worldly life. S : Worldly life, hm. What exactly is a simple life? You are content.

S : Content, yes. But with regard to the actual, external organisation of your life?

It's when your basic needs have been catered for.

S . Hm. It's well-regulated.

5 Hm, yes. It's well-regulated. You're satisfied with really quite basic things. Here, the Sramana is satisfied with just food obtained by begging. So, in the first place, one is satisfied with the bare necessities of life. One doesn't hanker after luxuries or things which aren't really necessary to life, or really necessary to the leading of the spiritual life. So, do you think this sort of simplicity, this sort of simple life, characterises life in the modern West, or in any industrialised society nowadays? Do you think there are actually things we don't need and could give up? Is that so? Or do we actually need ~~~~ or – all the things that we've got? What are the things we don't really need? Especially if we're trying to lead the spiritual life?

(end of side one)

~Ve It's difficult to say because, in a sense, living with technology ~~~k~~ - you soon get used to using it. But I think a good example would be if people who have been on solitary retreats go back to that experience, because in a situation~like that tend not to need the washing machine~television ~ that sort of technology.

S Mm, right. Of course it could be argued, with regard to technology, or rather the products of technology, that they give people more leisure. But, I mean, the point also could be raised, do they use that leisure creatively? If they don't, perhaps it was better that they didn't have those labour-savin~ devices. Maybe they~d be better off spending their day washing clothes and bringing buckets of water and so on.

° It seems to be how much you appreciate, or perhaps evaluate, if ~t~s modern technology or machinery, if you can actually make valuable use of it and of the time it can give you, but if it's... if you've got it just

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(ctd) : because it's there and you haven't really thought about it, then you take it for granted.

S : Mm, yes. It's also a question of whether these things really do help you to live more meaningfully or more purposefully or not.

They wouldn't in themselves.

5 : They wouldn't in themselves, but perhaps they could do if rightly used.

feel that in the Centre. I'm sure we could use a computer to do quite a lot of things and it wouldn't mean people had to sit there and do things themselves which you could do on a machine and it would leave the~people free to actually sort of . . . taking more classes and that.

S : But do you think that they would necessarily make that sort of use of the extra time that they had gained? Would that always be the case, do you think?

I think you do if it's through your own experience. That you've got to a point where you feel that you're doing something so, because you have to do it, because you have to cut ~ hundred carrots or whatever it is, and you are, in a sense, a machine, so you do know the value of having the machine to do that work for you.

S : Mm. Yes. Did you say: "Cut a hundred carrots"? Well, that was an- ~<~rnp~.

S : But can't you cut carrots mindfully and take it as an exercise in mindfulness? Is that not possible?

Oh, yes.

5 : Or is that being very, very idealistic?

Well it makes you very slow!

5 : Well, I would have thought that was pretty good for some people!

When your business is trying to make money...

5 : Well, your computer would cost you a pretty penny, set you back quite a bit, at least by way of initial outlay. But, I mean, what does a si-mple life, or simpler life mean within our present context? This is what I'm trying to get at. Is there anything that you could actually give up or not? I mean, does the climate make a difference? In India it's pretty easy to get by with a few things, a few pieces of cloth and a very simple dwelling and so on. Perhaps it depends on that to some extent. But what would be a simple life for us? I mean, by Indian standards even on this retreat we~re not leading a very simple life, they would think. We might think it very simple btit they wouldn't. But maybe climate does make a difference to some extent. You need more food,

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S(ctd) : for instance, to keep warm. You need better shelter to keep out the cold. You need better, warmer clothing.

To me, having a simple life suggests not having so many choices, like eating a smaller range of food.

S . Yes, right.

Not so many clothes, not so many people to see, p~aces to go, things to do.

S : Yes. In a way, a more integrated life, a less distracted life.

Not rushing here and there. Not being... I think outwards it's not busily organising your day so that you can fit ten thousand things in, like so many of us unfortunately do, but cutting it down perhaps, some of the things we do, some of the people we see. Those kinds of things I think would be very important for us.

S : Mm,yes. For instance, you might say, alright, supposing you were going to spend in the course of a day time with, let1s say, twenty people. Well, you could cut that down. You could, say, see you have contact with only four or five. But what would that mean? You could give those four or five more time. You could then go into things with them in greater depth, you could get to know them better. So in this way, simplifying your life would lead to an improvement in the quality of your life, certainly in the quality of your communication and your friendships. For simplicity also means not spreading yourself around too much. As you said, not trying to do too many things, see too many people. So simplicity, you could say, conduces to depth, yes?

It certainly seems true around the LBC. I know when I first arrived there was so much going

on. It's very easy just to get very intoxicated with it all.

S : Yes, yes. I mean, sometimes it's good to have contact with a lot of people. It's a different kind of experience. I must say, when I was in India, I thoroughly enjoyed having contact with ten thousand Buddhists all at once! But you can't, as it were, nourish yourself just on that. You must have also your closer, more intimate, more intensive contact with just a very few people. For instance, we know also sometimes people go on tour, don't they? They whizz through. I'm afraid most of the stories in this connection are told at the expense of Americans. I've seen some of them in India, doing the holy places. They allow, say, half an hour to Sarnath and three quarters of an hour to Buddhagaya. They've got one and a half days in India before they go on to Bangkok and spend half a day there and then Hong kong. They've got a week to do the world! So they don't really know whether they're photographing the Taj Mahal at Agra or whether it's somewhere in the Middle East or whatever. So here also there's going to be room for simplification. You just see fewer places, but you really see them more.

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S(ctd) : You see more of them in every way. You have a deeper experience of them, a closer contact with them. So simplicity, you could say, is the opposite of superficiality. If you're not simple you're superficial. Again, you spread yourself too widely. Spreading yourself too widely, whether among people or things, leads to superficiality. The same with books. Some people have got the tendency - I certainly had the tendency, or maybe I still have it - just to read anything that comes to hand. If you put a book near me, I'll read it, whatever it is. Do you see what I mean? But if you're not careful, this can lead to superficiality because you just skip through books. If you're the sort of compulsive reader, you just read straight through it. You don't give anything time to sink in, you don't absorb anything. So it's better perhaps, to cut down on your reading; just read a few things. To simplify in this way, but to know the books that you read much better, to experience them much better, especially, say, when it's a case of books on Buddhism. It's not a question of just skimming through all the books in the library, but really getting to know well and thoroughly a comparatively small number of volumes, so that you're really sort of soaked in the teaching of those volumes and really know it well and experience it and make it part of yourself. Not just superficially skimming through one book and then, as soon as you've finished, taking up another one. So one can simplify in this way too. So, simplicity here seems to involve concentration, doesn't it? And concentration involves, well, selectivity. Also I think simplicity involves some awareness of the needs of other people. I mean, for instance, take a very extreme example; are you really justified, for instance, in buying, let us say, a ten thousand guinea mink coat while there are other people in the world who haven't really got adequate clothing? You see what I mean? I mean, if everybody could have a mink coat - well, assuming it was an artificial mink coat - well, there would be no objection, however much it cost, if everybody had the money to buy one. But if there are people in the world who are just clad in rags, then are you really morally justified in spending money on your mink coat, even if it doesn't come from an animal? Do you see what I mean? So your simplicity is relative to somebody else's way of life. Your simplicity means, perhaps one can put it in this way, not monopolising more than your fair share of the earth's resources. If you are, you're not living simply. In that way, the whole Western world is not living simply. It is monopolising far more than its fair share of the earth's resources. If you're taking up more space, eating more food, consuming

more energy than you're entitled to as just one member of the human race, you're not living simply. So what other aspects could one see, if they were to live this simple life or living simply? You are also living in such a way that your cravings are not stimulated, that your cravings are decreased rather than increased. And that would surely mean that you were less distracted.

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The art seems to be something connected with being happy as well.

S : Yes. Ev~ . To be able to live simply and also to be happy.

S . Well, psychologists say that if, say, a married woman is not very happy in her marriage, well, what's one of the signs of that? She's always going and buying things; she's always going shopping, buying things that she doesn't really need. She's not happy. She's not contented.

: Then you see, if you are more like, if you are more aware through being simple then you should be more happy. In a sense it follows that if you are living simply then you're more aware of the positive effects of your. . . . of the simplicity in which you're living then it should (be taken as?) but then quite often it doesn't, does it?

S : Well, if you are not consciously and deliberately and willingly leading a simple life, you can experience that life as a life of deprivation. But, I mean, a lot depends upon mental attitude, not just on the number or the amount of the things that you have. I mean, somebody else just living your life with only the things that you have, may not feel it a life of happiness which you presumably do. They might feel it a life of deprivation and poverty. I mean, there's a verse in the 'Dhammapada' where the Buddha's disciples are represented as saying: "Happily we live, we who have nothing to call our own." Or words to that effect. I mean, very few people would rejoice in the fact that they didn't have anything that they could call their own. At least they would like a few things, say just a few books or a few records or a few clothes. They wouldn't be happy, they couldn't be happy if they were completely destitute of those things.

Is there any particular thing you could say about living in such a way that your craving is decreased? I've got a few ideas, but I wondered if you had anything particular in mind.

5 : It also involves perhaps not exposing yourself to unnecessary stimulation. I mean, look, for instance, at the advertisements. Perhaps you shouldn't buy magazines that contain lots and lots of advertisements and spend your time just leafing through them. That wouldn't help very much, would it, if you were prone to craving and wanted to lead a simple life? But maybe that applies more to someone living a bit more in the world than most of you do.

I think, I don't know, I sort of experience that as around us all the time, especially in London.

5 : Well, I suppose down in London it is.

In a way it's very hard to avoid. You just find yourself sort of thinking of something without even realising how you got to start thinking about it.

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S . I suppose you notice quite a difference coming up from London, those of you who normally live in London, to a place like this.

° Yes, it seems quite luxurious here! S . Oh dear! I'll tell the boys that. Fires in the shrine room. S . Yes. ° Left on for twenty-four hours!

S : Well, I don't expect that they normally have them on.

It's just their special hospitality°~

° This is just ordinary ()

S : I musn't, of course, speak of concessions to the weaker sex - that might be objected to! But ~y~~e~times it's difficult to know whether one is really~self-indulgent, straying away from the path of simplicity or not, or whether one is really meeting objective requirements. Last year so many of my friends, especially in the community, were urging me to get new clothes. So I was quite willing to get new clothes. So I went and had a look in Norwich, several shops. They all seemed so horribly expensive and I couldn't help doing quick mental calculations; how many poor families in India the price of a suit would keep goin~~ow many months; or else how many books on Buddhism I could buy for this, the cost of a new pair of trousers! So, it's very difficult in the end to know, so I ended up not buying any new clothes at all. But anyway, my birthday came round and some were bought for me, rather forcibly. But, I mean, where is one to draw the line, as it were? One sometimes feels, especially if one knows the situation in another country, like me, well, here we might spend on a meal, a sin~le meal, what would feed a family in India for a month. But then again, one might say, well, can one really compare? Some people I say no, but certainly one can think, well, let me spend as little as I reasonably can. Let me help other people with what I save, put it into Aid for India. I mean, certainly if one spent one's money on luxuries, well one wouldn't really be aware of the needs of other 4°) peopljon things that would be regarded as luxuries even here. In India still, a motorbike or a scooter is a luxury. That's not regarded as a luxury here. But a real diamond necklace is still a luxury here - or in the FWBO anyway. Not many of you have got diamond necklaces.

° It can be a bit of a false economy sometimes~ t hough,(~ backtr~tk) Because people can, say, buy a cheap jumper because they need a jumper and that jumper falls to bits in a month or two.

5 : Yes, that's true. Yes, yes. One must exercise a little foresight.
 But, ?L's said, a diamond necklace lasts forever! Quite a well-known saying that.
 Never wears out. That's why it, s a girl's best friend!

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Ye could buy r'~ V;br~r~ ~F 0~~~~give~ to us~ T s~rr~~.

S : If somebody gave me a diamond necklace, I'd turn it into half a
 dozen Padmalokas very quickly. One could also say that the simple life ~s a ~ife
 with - I was going to say plenty, but maybe I should(~~stay a certain
 amount, of space in it. It's not a life crowded with activities and interests.
 I say this because I remember a little essay I wrote once on pauses and empty
 spaces. I mentioned, indicated something in the music of Mozart. Mozart was
 asked once what was the most important part of his music and he said the
 pauses~ the empty spaces. If you listen to Mozart and maybe to other composers
 too, the pauses are very significant. Without them the music would be
 quite different, might even be meaningless. So it may be it is the pauses,
 the empty spaces, in our0Wi~~ives which give them more meaning. It's the
 simplicity of our lives that gives them more meaning. Mm. And this is
 quite nice, this is almost poetic: "If there is a tree under which to rest, he desires
 nothing else." You've been indulging in a little of that sort of thing
 lately, in selecting a home, over in Ireland. Perhaps you
 d~~~~t even have a tree?

() ~ra~bie~.

S : Well, you~ were lucky, you had brambles too bf~~kc 6errtt£.
 So, "If there is a tre nder which to rest, he desires nothing else." In
 othe words, what's the principle? He doesn't desire anything other than what
 he actually needs at the moment. Just the tree is quite adequate. It
 gives enough shelter. That's all he needs, so that's all he desires. His desires
 don't outrun his needs.

Would they be fruit trees, perhaps? /3~t1ttc~ ad be~ ~or fooa.

S : Perhaps. In the case of some people, they might have not just a
 tree Tb ey,mi,,gh~~~av~0e a bea but they might d~As~r~~atn~ even
 more%V%eaSPti~u~ouse.~LA~ They~re always searching for something bigger
 and better, perhaps on account ,,,,o,fwrong ideas about status, what
 other people may thin~.~ You find people do that with their cars. They'll have a
 perfectly adequate car, but they still want a bigger and better car. So
 it's a question of meeting on~~~ needs and not indulging on~~ s greed, being
 content. T mean you're content with the tree. I mean, the tree is all you need
 in the way of shelter, so you re content with that. So one could
 e-ven say also that the simple life is the life in which greeds do not outstrip needs.
 You don't hanker not only after what you don't have, but after what you
 don't need. I -mean one does find people doing this, doesn't one?

Hankering after what they don't need.
not satisfied.

They've got what they need but they're

You've got to be very aware of yourself to do that, because I think that we are used to, like, a lot of things that we don't need and to have an attitude to accept' well, to live happily or whatever without those things, somehow you've got to actually see what you're

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(ctd) : doing, which means somehow seeing through them. So, I think that that seems to me the difficulty, to actually break down the process that's already been set up.

S : Mm. Yes. I mean, during the war there used to be a slogan which one saw everywhere: 'Is your journey really necessary?' In other words, is it an expression of need or is it an expression of greed, maybe in the form of restlessness? Is your telephone call really necessary? Is your new frock really necessary? Also one needs to define 'necessary' clearly, perhaps. Perhaps it's necessary that you just go out and buy something that you don't need. Perhaps it's psychologically necessary sometimes, eh? But it does seem to me in most Western countries we could quite happily live a bit more simply than we do, at least that could be said. I mean, it's said that so many under-developed countries could live out of the dustbins of some of the modern-day countries. I'm staggered by the amount of stuff that we throw away, including food. I'm always getting on to the communities in which I'm staying. I sometimes say I really wish we could keep pigs because people feed pigs. We could keep a couple of pigs here quite easily. But of course we can't, being Buddhists, because of what we would have to do with them. We would have to slaughter them. But so much food is thrown away. I think one has to be more careful, just to calculate how much you really need, how many people are going to be eating, otherwise you throw it away every day, food for so many people, which is quite wrong.

How about chickens?

S : Well, chickens are chancy sort of creatures. You know, they....

Fussy.

S : Fussy. And they get... what is it that chickens get? Their feet start swelling and they die! Chickens are not easy to keep, they need a lot of looking after. So, what about time? You see, you might save food but waste time. They're temperamental. They don't always lay eggs when you want them. Or they might lay them the wrong colour! But they're messy creatures with their clucking around. They've got this business of scratching and they're not really very attractive creatures, are they?

.You've obviously had bad experience of chickens.

S : I've seen the chickens.

Punyavati : I find it's difficult in England though, for people to be aware of being wasteful,

or even over-indulging, because there's not poverty like you see it. I know in Africa, in Kenya where I grew up, it's very, very difficult to leave food on your plate or be wasteful. There's always beggars coming to the door and you can see people who are starving, literally, and you see poverty, disease, decay around you and it always makes you aware of yourself, and others' fortune or misfortune.

S : Yes. I was talking the other day down in 'Sukhavati'

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S(ctd) : about all the garlands, about the flower garlands, mostly marigold garlands, I used to get in the course of meetings a time in India, sometimes forty, fifty, sixty~, a great heap of them like this. So, someone asked me: "Well, what do you do with them? What happens to them?" So I said: "Well, they're not wasted. They're given to the cows. The cows eat them, because they are perfectly good nourishment." So they're not just wasted. They're not just thrown away. The cows are quite glad to have them. Cats also eat them very happily. But, I mean, here people very often throw away clothes. Well, perhaps that doesn't matter very much because they're going to jumble sales or they go to Oxfam and eventually they come to people who need them.

.Simplicity also involves keeping things small, I think, too, in the larger co-ops perhaps, in that the larger things become in terms of co-ops, in terms of things; it doesn't mean you can't have lots of different things but it means you can't grow beyond a certain point, sort of thing. Where they become, perhaps, not possible to...

S : I'm not sure whether you're saying they should be bigger or smaller.

.They should be smaller. They shouldn't be too large, I'm saying.

S . They shouldn't be unmanageably large.

.Yes, that's right.

S : But what is unmanageable presumably depends to some extent on the capacity of the manager. Some people can manage quite complex situations. Others just can't do that.

.I was going to ask if you'd like to remind us, if numbers, like you were saying, the number of people you can see in a day;~that in a situation of a team, the number of people who can actually communicate quite well and have time together, and with a co-op a team is part of the rules of a co-op, how much you can actually relate to four or five different businesses. This is something I'm just starting thinking about in London, and the effect it has. Even though you could say the Pure Land Co-op isn't very big, in a sense it's too big, because it's... people aren't really in touch with each other. We're all trying to do too much.

S : I think one has to think clearly here. If it's a question of, say, working together as a

spiritual community, that's to say the team-based Right Livelihood situation being in itself the spiritual community, then clearly there are numerical limits. It can't go beyond eight or, at the very most, ten or twelve people. But on the other hand, it may be an advantage for a number of different businesses to be parts of one and the same co-op. Do you see what I mean? And for the different businesses to have a liaison with one another. in terms But one certainly shouldn't think of an equal or even communication with all the other people in the co-op.

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S(ctd) : simply because they are in one and the same co-op. I think one shouldn't even try to do that. But that doesn't mean that one shouldn't have a link-up between a number of different businesses in the same co-op. It isn't intended, one might say, that everybody should be in deep communication with everybody else. It's useful to belong to that bigger structure, but as regards personal communication, well, you look for that to your own immediate team that you get. I mean, when I say you should clearly not be thinking, what I mean is, you shouldn't think that because your co-op, which is your live, working situation, is part of a larger framework, it's incumbent on you to have the same kind of contact with everybody in the co-op that you have within your own small section or (~-

But if you are in a broader co-op, you do need to be aware of other people that make up that co-op...

S : Yes, to the extent which is necessary for your mutual, helpful functioning. But that doesn't necessarily mean that you need to have the close personal communication or deep personal communication with everybody in the co-op that you have within your own particular team. You recognise that there is a sort of gradation of levels of communication. Because there's a certain... there are certainly advantages in belonging to bigger units; for instance, you may be able to buy in bulk. But that doesn't mean to say that you should even try to communicate with all the members of those larger units. I think that's impossible. But the fact that you're part of a bigger set-up doesn't oblige you to try to do that. You're not part of a bigger set-up for the sake of intense communication with everybody in it, but for the sake of its practical advantages. There must be some communication, obviously, but your deepest communication, presumably, would be with those people with whom you spend most time and work most closely and with whom, perhaps, you also live. I mean, if one takes, say the FWOM as a whole, if one takes the Movement as a whole, in the Order there are 168 people, but they don't all have the same deep communication with one another nor is it conceivable that they should, except, perhaps, - and one has to look at this side of things too - when they all happen to be meditating at the same time. Perhaps there is then a mutual communication on that sort of level. But you can't have an effective practical communication (publicly). It is impossible, nor should you try. You just concentrate on communication with your own Chapter of the Order, or people you work with around the Centre, while remaining open to communication with any other Order Member that you are sort of thrown together with temporarily, as on retreat. So it's much the same in the case of business. There's an advantage in belonging to a co-op which embraces a number of businesses. You can enjoy certain facilities in common which would be much more expensive if you had to hire your own. But you don't look, therefore, for equally deep communication with everybody in the business, or everybody in the co-op. For your deepest communication, you look into the business with which

S (ctd) : you are personally involved, plus one or two people outside with whom you communicate in a different sort of way, or f"rdifferent ~s~fl~

Mm. It just seems that in practice, well, that the Pure Land Co-op was set up sharing certain facilities in common, i.e. people doing accounts for the businesses, and it's become that.... well, it's changing again, but it had been that people in the individual businesses didn't really relate to the business and didn't take responsibility. So now we're going back towards more autonomous.... each unit being more autonomous.

S : Well, one advantage has to be weighed against another. Advantages have to be weighed against disadvantages, &~t A~s to try and strike the best possible balance. I mean, you may find that in this way the business becomes less profitable, but you may consider that worthwhile in view of the fact that other advantages are gained or vice versa. One thinks that one could be so autonomous that you cease to be profitable, theoretically, but that wish would mean that you disintegrate and there wouldn't be any business left at all. So one, as I said, has got to actually strike a balance. You might insist &n having your own building, your own electricity supply, your own telephone, your own transport, everything your own; but that's fine as regards autonomy, but what about profitability?

Well, it's more like how people connect with the principle t~t ~CU're trying to....

S : Mm, yes, but if they connect with the principle only by being completely autonomous, well, that would perhaps, and I'm speaking just theoretically, undermine the business as such. What I'm saying is that autonomy can't be regarded as an absolute value, any more than profitability can be regarded as an absolute value. You have to try and get the best deal that you can, bearing all the different factors in mind.

It keeps changing anyway.

S : We mustn't be dogmatic, even about autonomy! One factor in a total situation. Again, profitability, we mustn't be dogmatic about profitability either. It's one factor. Anyway, we've got rather a long way from the simple life. Just one, just this last sentence before we conclude. "Longings and desires are what make men stupid and darken their minds." So what does this mean? It's one's cravings limit one's outlook. They restrict you. They make you see things in a particular way, or even not see them at all, and that's really quite extraordinary, hm? Can you think of any concrete examples? Well, take this question of profitability. Supposing you've got a business, maybe a non-co-op sort of business, and you're so concerned with profitability, you're so concerned with making money, you close your eyes to the fact that you're ruining your own health, L~at

S (ctd) : you're heading for a nervous breakdown, hm? So, "Longings and desires are

what make men stupid and darken their minds." You don't realise the harm that you're doing to yourself in pursuit of your craving. You don't realise you're ceasing just to enjoy a drink, you're becoming an alcoholic, maybe you don't realise it. So, the more you pursue cravings, the more you darken your mind, you become stupid and ignorant. However, in a way, outwardly successful you may appear to be. You may think that you're a very clever person but really perhaps you're just very stupid. You may be thinking you're making a grand success of your life but actually it could be that you're a dismal failure in purely human terms. It reminds me of a little story about an American businessman who was introduced to another businessman by a friend of his. And the businessman who did the introducing said about the man he was introducing - he said: "He's a real ~~~~ successful man, made a great success of his life, ~ He's really mean." And the first man took it as a compliment. He smiled because he was introduced as really mean. So his mind, one might say, had been darkened and he was stupid. But craving can narrow one's outlook. Concentration on the satisfaction of one's cravings can narrow one's outlook, can blinker one. You're concentrating on something so obsessively that you miss so much else, so many other things. Sometimes you just defeat your own purpose. Maybe you think: "Well, when I've made my pile I'll retire and take life easy and enjoy myself," but in the course of making your pile you lose all capacity for enjoyment, so it's self-defeating.

(about dieting, that people get so neurotic about food....

(end of tape)

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S : Alright, section 5. Would someone like to read that?

"The Buddha said: "There are ten things by which beings do good and ten by which they do evil. What are they? Three are performed with the body, four with the mouth and three with the mind. The (evils) performed with the body are killing, stealing and unchaste deeds; those with the mouth are duplicity, slandering, lying and idle talk; those with the mind are covetousness, anger and foolishness. These ten are not in keeping with the holy Way and are called the ten evil practices. Putting a stop to all of them is called performing the ten virtuous practices."

S : So what is this section really concerned with?

The ten precepts.

S : The ten precepts. The ten 'kusala-dharmas' ~ the ten 'akusala-dharmas'. One notices here that in the English translation the expression used here is ~good~ and 'evil' and that the Pali or Sanskrit original would be ~k~sala~ or 'kausalya', that would be unskillful or 'unskillful' which has just a slightly different connotation. So one also notices that in the

case of the evils performed with the mouth, mention is made of duplicity, slandering, lying and idle talk. It seems there has been a little confusion somewhere along the line, because the first one is actually lying, then there's harsh speech, then there is... what is the third one?

Idle talk.

S : Idle talk, useless talk, and then slander and back-biting. Do you think we know very well what these ten are in their positive and negative forms? Is this familiar ground?

Yes. S : Oh dear! It's familiar ground, is it? Trish : I'm not so sure about the positive counterparts of.

S : Let's look at the positive counterparts, then. What is the positive counterpart... well, the translation here says killing. The precept, of course, speaks in its positive 'in its form as taken together with the refuge, speaks of abstaining from injuring living beings./ 'anāpāta Veramāni Sikkhapadam.' The 'pan-tip-ta' is something like this, injuring, literally, breathing beings. So clearly it's more than just not killing them, it's abstaining from injuring or abstaining from causing injury. So what would be the positive counterpart? Instead of causing injury, what do you do? ~~~ itot jLA~t ~St&L~,~ iro~ ~ ~k)n~ of i~, ~t ~~~&L&hS ~s~ ~ ~t~at ~r Cokt~3~S 'tk Foster well-being? th~~rf~~ livu~~ bt~gs./

S : Foster well-being, one could say, yes. Compassion.

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S : Compassion even, one could say, or 'metta', one could say. Usually I think it is said that 'metta', however one translates that, is the positive counterpart of abstaining from injury to living beings. And then what about stealing? What is the positive counterpart of abstaining from killing? Though again it isn't just stealing (abstaining from stealing, rather), it isn't just stealing, it's abstaining from taking what is not given. So what would be the positive counterpart of that?

Generosity, 'dana'.

S : Yes, 'dana', generosity. Here it says 'unchaste deed~~'. 'Kamesu ~icchachara'. Abstaining from, usually it's translated as sexual misconduct. So what would be the positive counterpart of abstaining from sexual misconduct?

Contentment.

S : Yes. Contentment. Can we be more specific than that?

Pure? S . Pure actions? Being content with what situation you're in. Not craving something.

S . Not craving is a negative formul~; we're looking for positive. Content comes near, but it is content in a rather specific sense or specific form.

Being happy, joyful.

S . Being happy, joyful, yes. One might even say, self-content. Alright, the positive counterpart of duplicity, in the sense of false speech, lying. That's pretty obvious, isn't it? Truth, truthfulness. And the positive counterpart of - slander comes here, but it usually should be harsh speech - well, that's pretty obvious, isn't it? Kindly, affectionate speech. And then useless, idle talk - what's the positive counterpart of that? Useful, helpful, timely, Dharma talk. %backbiting, abstaining from those - what's the positive counterpart of that?

Seeing people's positive qualities.

S : It's not just seeing them, but speaking them. It's more like telling other people, third parties, about somebody's positive qualities, instead of slandering them and backbiting. The opposite of that is speaking well of people to other people, not running them down behind their backs. Then there's covetousness, anger and foolishness. So what is the positive counterpart of abstaining from covetousness 2

S of 42 S D2 TI 3 48 That would be 'dana'.

S : Again, that would be 'dana', though in a wider sense. And then, abstaining from anger, what would that be? Again, that's 'metta' but it's in a wider and deeper sense. This is more a question of mental attitude, practice. One could say that the positive counterpart of abstaining from injury to living beings is the performance of loving actions; but here one is concerned more with the mental state itself. In a way, at a deeper level, irrespective of action. And then, here the text says 'foolishness', but really it's more specific than that. It's abstention from wrong views. 'Miccha-ditthis'. So what's the counterpart of that?

Wisdom.

S : Wisdom, yes. But this question of wrong views, 'miccha-ditthis', this is quite important, because just as wisdom finds expression in specific teachings, one might say, in the same way, ignorance, or bewilderment, mental confusion, intellectual confusion, finds expression in various 'miccha-ditthis'. I think probably everybody who is trying to develop should draw up their own private list of 'miccha-ditthis'. Especially the

ones to which they're particularly prone.~ A'uJ these are not necessarily
'miccha-ditthis' which are found in Buddhist texts or Buddhist scriptures. These
may not be very relevant to us nowadays, in some cases. There may
be personal, private 'miccha-ditthis' of our own. There may be others which are
current in our particular culture or civilisation or society. Let me give you a
little example. One that I've noticed even within the Friends is to this effect:
supposing you've made an arrangement to meet somebody, but then you
don't turn up and later on you meet the person with whom you had the
appointment and he asks you, or she asks you: "Why didn't~you turn up?" And
you say: "Oh, I'm sorry I couldn't come. I had to do something else." Do
you see? Well, it was not that you had to do some- thing else; it might have been that
you had to go and see a film instead or you had to go and meet somebody
else, but actually it was your choice. You broke your appointment quite
deliberately, but you're refusing to accept the responsibility for that. So
youVre trying to suggest that you, as it were,... or you were under
compulsion, that you were forced to do some- thing. Like a qort of fate, you
had no choice and in that way you try to excuse yourself. So this is a
'miccha~ditthi', that you had to do some- thing, rather than realising, rather than
admitting that you chose to do something rather than what you had under-
taken to do. Can you think of any other, any particular
'miccha-ditthis' that you've sometimes fallen victim to, or seen other
people fall victim to? Or haven't you usually thought along these lines?

Trish : Have you got any hints for how you spot them?

S : I think that one can say that very often 'miccha-ditthis' are rationalisations
For instance, in the case of the

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S(ctd) : example I gave, you're rationalising the fact that you preferred to do something
else rather than to keep your appointment, to keep your promise. You're rationalising that.
You're not recognising the fact that you would rather have done what you actually did than
have kept your appointment, kept your promise. Yoii 're rationalising the fact that you donut
attach very much value to your promises or to other people's feelings and also that you're not
willing to accept responsibility for your own actions. So I think very often 'miccha-ditthis'
represent rationalisations. So if we keep our eyes open for rationalisations, we may well
eflcouter 'micch~ditthis'

I know mine. I'm often late. I rationalise that some- times.

S : So you say. I had to do something else.' i?~rjt . ThatTs right.

Noel : When you want to do something that you don't normally, say, have time for
and it might mean that you wouldn't get to work that day or you wouldn't go to the class that
night, so you say: "Well, it's good for my development. Perhaps I'll go do such and such."
It's really just that you don't want to do something else.

S : Right. I have spoken about this more than once, this 'miccha-ditthi' of 'I'm doing it because it's good for my development.' This can only too often be a rationalisation. Some people say: "Well, I didn't really lose my temper, I didn't really get angry, but I just let myself in a way get angry because I thought it would be good for my development, not just to sit on all that, not just to repress it." Similarly: "I'm going away for a holiday in Greece this year. I think it's good for my development"2 See what I mean?

Carla : Unblock my energies.

S . To unblock my energies! In that way you can justify anything as necessary or helpful to your development. So in that way it can become a sort of 'miccha-ditthi'. The way in which you use the idea of development, or misuse the idea of development.

Elsie : I'm sure it's very much like every self-excuse is a 'miccha-ditthi'

S . Yes, yes.

Trish : You said that they could be on a cultural level. What sort of things would

S : When I said on a cultural level, I meant that certain 'miccha-ditthis' may be current in our environment, in our particular culture. We sort of pick them up from there without really sort of realising what we're doing. You might say this idea, for instance, of self-expression. It's always good to express yourself, you've got to express yourself. Well, we tend to take it for granted that you must do that. That you musn't put up with anything, that you mustn't just keep things

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S(ctd) : under control, as it were. You've got to express it. If you get angry, you~ve got to express it. If you feel upset, you've got to express it. Under certain circumstances that may be so, but to express yourself is not necessarily a virtue. We tend to think it is. For instance, in some cultures, say, in the East, in India or even in classical China, it was not considered always a very g%(~d~~thing to express what you felt. It was often thoughtjnot to express what you felt was the positive thing to do, to control yourself, to keep your anger in check. Maybe not even to show that you were angry, to put on a smile; not, as it were, hypocritically, but because you join in the thought that to express a negative mental state was not a desirable ~~~hing to do. I we tend to think nowadays, in the West, that you~ ve just got to express it. If you feel angry or upset or disappointed or hurt you've got to show it.

And you have to be open. 45 S . Yes, wet?tflk aF itL'openness' of openness as a _____ ~ we think great virtue. It's not necessarily so.

Eve : But I don't get the feeling that a lot of people actually do show what they feel. That maybe it's an idea that They would like to show what they feel and in that sense build it up to be something it's not, but a lot of people don't actually show what they do feel.

They rationalise it.

S : In many cases no doubt they don't, but even those who don't express what they feel may well subscribe to the 'miccha-ditthi' that you always ought to express what you feel. In some cases they may not express their feelings because they're actually blocked emotionally, or in other cases it may be because actually they do~t have any sort of tendency that way, but they think of iL as a weakness, because they also think, or they also share the view, that one ought to express one's feelings, whereas that may not be, in fact, their natural tendency in all cases.

Carla : I was thinking of another thing which I think is a 'micch~ditthi' of this culture, would be the tendency to think that if you care about what others think of you then that is weakness, whereas in Buddhism, isn't the fear of blame actually a positive LM

S : Yes, fear of blame, the ()r>Lwhat one might say A one might describe, as the positive group, is regarded as a, well, as a virtue, as a skilful mental state. One might put this in a more extreme form, that there is the 'niccha-ditthi' that you must never feel guilty and you must never make anybody else feel guilty. Sometimes it is said: "Oh, you mu5~~~t tell him that, or you mu~t tell her that, he or she might feel guilty." Well, if they've done soniethingit~lly unskilful, why shouldn't they feel guilty, in an objective sort of way?

Why should they be excused that which everyone ought to feel guilty, so that they can then repent and decide not to do it again?

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S(ctd) : If you've committed some perfectly awful action, well, why should it not be pointed out to you? Why should you not feel guilty that you performed that action? Do you see what I mean? We've gone to extremes. We can see quite easily why this has happened, why we fall into this particular 'miecha- ditthi'. Because we're so riddled with ~ vitiated by irrational feelings of guilt d1Ie to our Christian back- ~7~'Jn~that we throw away the baby with the bath water. We don't even accept the possibility of feeling rational guilt for genuinely unskilful actions. Do you see the distinction?

I was just wondering if everybody felt irrationally guilty.

S : Well, I'm sure there are some lucky people who escaped their Christian upbringing! I hope there are! Or orthodox Christian upbringing, anyway.

I think another 'miccha-ditthi' is being an individual, t4A~n °i~ j~st ~c~~ ~~~~tr;~
u,'~~~

S : Yes. Claiming to be an individual~are just being individualistic.

Teresa : Another one would be the right, one has the right to do whatever
you want to do with your () Ani,si&I~)'av~ ~L'9~t~. S
Yes. Plants have rights. You have the right to give people rights! I think if
one thinks about it one realises there are really quite a lot of common 'miccha-
ditthis There are the glaringly obvious ones. The ones that
perhaps one is so much a victim of. The on5e0s""w~""ifch ~r.~
mentioned in Buddhist texts, like the belief in some power outside of oneself
that is going to do it all for you. It's a very crude and obvious 'miccha-ditthi'.
rhe one that thinks that everything is due to fate or desLiny, or to
accident or chance. We're probably not likely to be bothered by these more
obvious 'miccha-ditthis', but there are the more subtle, apparently sort of
justifiable ones which are sometimes just extreme orve~s~t ~tements of quite
reasonable positions, aswitj the 'miccha-ditthi' of never making
anybody feel guilty under any circumstances.

Just thinking in terms of everyone being equal ~~~t~ oth~r~e~, ""J~

S . Well, .ia~ one thinks in terms of people being, as it were, quantiquely equal, in the
sense of exactly the same, well then, that is another 'miccha-ditthi'. If one thinks in that sort
of way instead of thinking that people equally should have the opportunity to develop and to
evolve.

Punya- : It's very difficult to see all these 'miccha~ditthis', vat i and
when you first asked questions about what () I just couldn't see them because...
I could see in other people some of them, but not in myself. I think I have
to be very honest with myself to be able to spot them. Even the ones we
went through just now, I find them

quite subtle really.

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S : One could say that a 'miccha-ditthi' represents a sort of crystallisation of a wrong
view which is expressed in sort of general intellectual terms, as a sort of pseudo- philosophy
or pseudo-principle, and to which you quite strongly adhere. Do you see what I mean?

Could you say that again?

S : A 'miccha-ditthi' is not just a wrong idea that you just happen to have or that just
passes through your mind. A 'miccha-ditthi' represents more than that. It's a sort of
crystallisation, in the sense of a sort of consistent intellectual expression of a sort of wrong or
mistaken attitude or notion which receives intellectual justification and in which you strongly

believe, which you affirm as your belief.

So you're attached to it quite strongly. You identify with it.

S : Yes. Of course you may not do this fully consciously, but that is implicit...

Teresa : So, like the view of being born a Christian or born a Buddhist?

S : Right. Yes. That's another example of a 'miccha-ditthi' among Buddhists, that you can be born a Buddhist, when what one should really say, what one should really mean, is that one can be born into a Buddhist family, but you can't be born a Buddhist.

Is the crystallisation where it becomes a more permanent thing? You identify....

S . Yes. It becomes more permanent, more fixed, more rigid. There's something for you to hang onto more. It's not just a passing, sort of fleeting, mistaken idea.

Well is that something different then, the wrong idea?

S : That is- ~eiI~ a wrong idea can grow into a ~iccha~ditthi~ But the 'miccha-ditthi' is the fully-fledged form of the wrong idea. The wrong idea fully crystallised and actually expressed, even justified and, of course, adhered to. A Buddhist would regard belief in god as a 'miccha-ditthi' of that kind because many arguments have been brought forward in... to support belief in god~and people adhere to this belief very strongly~ all philosophies of theisms we recor~ C~~. So 'miccha-ditthis' can be built up, can become stronger and stronger, built up over the centuries in the case of~~~~ 6~ the more prominent ones.

Teresa : What's the difference between that and dogma, tli~t'?

S : Hm. Dogma is not, strictly speaking, a Buddhistic term, but it comes very close. Dogma in Christian tradition means a sort of definitive statement of Christian doctrine, but as the term is usually used outside that context, it means a belief to which one adheres very strongly and irrationally, and on behalf of which you are ready to take up arms, even, which you are prepared to

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S(ctd) : defend1 whether literally or metaphorically. So, dogma, yes, the term dogma does come very close to 'miccha-ditthi'

Stephanie : It seems to me that a dogma is ~elated to the way in which you hold a belief, the relationship you have with it, whereas 'miccha-ditthi' suggests the thing is actually wrong. Dogma could be right, b1LL~ou have it in the wrong way. You don't have an insight into it and you're rigid about it.

S : There is something of that in the case of 'miccha-ditthi', because it seems as though originally the Buddha did speak just in terms of 'ditthis'. In a sense~ every 'ditthi' is a 'miccha-ditthi'. That is to say, every 'ditthi' can become a 'miccha~ditthi', that you

cling on to it as a source of security. Even if, in a sense, it's a 'samma-ditthi'. You might even say some 'samma-ditthis' are more 'samma-ditthis' than others, but even what is in a sense a 'samm-a-ditthi' can become a 'miccaditthi' if you adopt a wrong attitude towards it. For instance, let me give you an example, in India there are quite a lot of people, quite a lot of Hindus, who are strict vegetarians. Well, that's alright as an application of the teaching of non-violence, but they're really rigid about it, they're really dogmatic about it. If anyone happens to say to them they are non-vegetarians, well, they just hold up their hands in horror: "You're a non-vegetarian, you eat meat, that's really dreadful". As though the whole of virtue, the whole of religion, was summed up in vegetarianism. So there's nothing wrong with vegetarianism. Vegetarianism in itself, one might say, is highly skilful, but if you make a dogma out of vegetarianism and insist on it in this way, well, it's a 'miccha-ditthi'. That vegetarianism is a skilful way of acting, yes, that is a 'samma-ditthi', but that vegetarianism is the main virtue, in fact almost the only virtue, well, that is definitely a 'micch--ditthi'. So, it is very much, even in the case of 'samma-ditthis', a question of attitudes. Even a 'samma-ditthi' is not fully a 'samma-ditthi' unless you entertain that 'samma-ditthi' with the right attitude. In another way some people attach an exaggerated importance to teetotalism. They become dogmatic about it, or fanatical about it.

Marlene : If you come across a set of wrong ideas, would you only get caught up with it if you already had a bit of the wrong attitude in you?

S : Yes~ I think very few people are convinced of the truth of 'miccha-ditthis' on purely objective, intellectual grounds. Yes, I think there must be some trace of the corresponding wrong emotional attitude for you to find the 'miccha-ditthi' congenial, or to be ready to accept it or consider accepting it. Another 'miccha-ditthi' that I've just thought of is that if you have any, say, positive feelings, for instance, devotional feelings, it isn't necessary to express them. A bit the opposite of the one we were talking about before. It's not necessary to express them. Anyway, is that true, would you say?

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I think a lot of people find pujas difficult when they first come along.

S : It's enough if you just bow mentally, just bow in your mind. That, one could say, is a 'miccha-ditthi'. Because if the feeling~~w~~s~~really there and really strong, well, quite spontaneous~y,~i?~ would find outward expression. Just as in human relations it would be very odd if you were to feel a genuine and strong affection towards somebody and you never gave any indication of it. Well, it might then be doubted, apart from your being absolutely blocked, whether you did actually feel that way at all.

Trish : Bhante, I wasn't quite altogether clear about you saying about being open and that taking openness as a virtue being 'miccha-ditthis'. Do you mean, perhaps, it's better to be honest but not necessarily to show it?

S : Ah. I was referring to the fact that, in some cultures

at least, what we regard as openness is not necessarily considered a virtue. Some people consider, or some cultures consider, reserve a virtue, taciturnity a virtue. So that suggests that we shouldn't assume that openness is always and under all the circumstances a virtue - and its opposite is necessarily a virtue. Do you see what I mean? In some cultures, to give an example with which you may or may not agree, it is considered the wife should be long-suffering! In our culture we don't even like the word 'long-suffering'. For instance, I saw an example of this in an Indian film: the wife was getting a bit upset, she was a bit worried about her daughter, about her daughter's prospects of marriage. So the husband they were a fairly elderly couple - came up and said: "I don't like this. I don't like to see gloomy faces. Come on, smile!" So she smiled. In that culture that is considered positive behaviour. Maybe in our culture people might think that the right thing for the wife to do is to let her worry and all that sort of thing really hang out and share it with her husband and insist on his hearing all about it. But no, she just, so to speak, suppressed her own worry and she put on a smile when called upon to do so. Not only that, it was a genuine smile, that is also perhaps the point that one should see. It was a genuine smile. She didn't just pretend.

Punyavati : Indian films aren't very good examples.

S : This sort of film perhaps was, because it wasn't a run of the mill Indian film in such a deep way. (1)

Punyavati : Oh that's different! Most of them show long-suffering wives - over ten sing-h songs at the end or in the temple sing to the gods.

S : Yes. So I think we also have to be on the watch for ~miccha~dit~his~ derived from our own tradition or our own culture, not assume or see the ~m~ccha~ ditthis', say, in other cultures, but be unable to see it in our own.

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Seeing through one's conditioning really, isn't it?

S . Yes. It's seeing through one's conditioning. ()

Punyavati : I was thinking about that, about 'miccha~ditthis'~ how much they are connected with conditioning.

S : Yes, indeed. In the sense that so much of our thinking, so-called, is the product of conditioning. It's not our thinking, we've just taken it over from the group, which ever it is to which we belong, whether it's from our social group or family group, our trade union group, our political group. We don't think things out for ourselves more often than not. For instance, a question which is currently being discussed, I don't know if you know anything about it, is limiting the power of trade unions. Well, if you're a trade union man, well, the idea of limiting the power of trades

unions would cause you to react violently ~~~ instantly. Whereas if
 you're not the sort of person who belongs to a trade union or particularly
 favours them, it might sL-rike you as seeming rather a good idea. But
 maybe in neither case would you really give it much
 Lhought. You'll respond according to whether you actually do belong to the
 trades union movement or not. If you do belong to the trades union
 movement, probably it'll be a-xiomatic for you that there should be
 absolutely no restriction whatever, under any
 cumstances, on the power of trades unions. You take it as axiomatic,
 something that's obvious, it should be obvious to all right-minded
 people. Well, that would seem to be an example of conditioning in most
 cases. I'll give you another example, maybe drawn a bit from
 politics and a bit controversial; that everybody should have a
 vote. We take it for granted. We haven't really thought about
 it, have we? But should everybody have a vote? Should there be no
 qualifications for the vote, other than you're not a criminal or a
 lunatic? What about qualifications for standing as a Member of Parliament?
 We take it for granted that any Tom, Dick or Harry, sorry, or Jane or
 Jill or Judy~ can be qualified to stand as a Member of
 Parliament. This question has been raised recently in India because
 Members of Parliament are nowadays such an awful scruffy
 bunch~ that some people are seriously raising questions of
 whether there should not be qualifications, educational qualifications,
 academic qualifications for Members of Parliament. But they find it very
 difficult to decide what qualifications exactly, ~~~people seem to feel that
 not just anybody should be a Member of Parliament.
 Again, we've tended to take all that for granted. That anybody
 can have a ~ote, that anybody can become a Member of Parliament
 etc. ~hat~s because perhaps, to some extent at least, of our
 polit{ca~cultural conditioning. We assume that that's a good
 s~stem. That everybody should have a vote. Iv the same way we assume
 that a multi-party system is a good thing, that for instance, we're
 speaking about England now, but in some countries they come to
 different conclusions. They think a one-party system is much
 better. To us that seems really wrong. We don't even
 think

S(ctd) : about it, it's just wrong. We don't even bother to argue the case. Obviously it's
 undemocratic and all Lhat sort of thing. But is it? You see, again, we have to ask ourselves,
 well, are we not just influenced by our cultural, political conditioning? Many people in
 England take it for granted that monarchy is an ideal form of government. Not everybody
 would agree with that. In America, of course, they're convinced that a republican form of
 government is the only one for sensible, free, liberated, enterprising people! But again, is that
 the case? We're very much influenced by our conditioning, by the views, the ideas, the ideals,
 the group into which we are born, anA in which we are brought up.

Trish : At home, everyone has to vote. You get fined if you don't. When I came here, on voting day, I was asking people: "Aren't you going to vote?" and they thought I was crazy

and I'd never questioned it before~at all. I just assumed that you voted, that everyone voted.

S : Yes. g0 ~rhaps we ought to take a more careful look at ourselves and our views and just ask ourselves, well, are we not very conditioned? Do we not just reflect, very often, the views current in our environmentojid 'un the particular group or groups to which we belong of what- soever kind?

(end of side one)

Not just coming out with it.

S : Yes. You've thought about it, thought it out, thought it through perhaps, at least to some extent. Not just jump to conclusions, not just react. I mean, there's nothing more boring than to have a conversation with someone whose views are entirely predictable. And very often you find people's views go in clusters. Supposing you meet someone who is in favour of capital punishment. You can be reasonably certain if he's in favour of capital punishment, well, perhaps he'll be in favour of fox-hunting too! He won't be a vegetarian and that he~ll vote Conservative! There are clusters of attitudes, clusters of 'miccha- ditthis'. Do you see what I mean? Y0u~~,~~t one off, the others come along with it. One can give illustrations from people on the other side of the political f~nce. There's the belief~n the of the sexes, they're equality pro-abortion, pro-homosexuality etc. etc. All these attitudes go together. In the case of Buddhists, well, there's another sort of constellation of attitudes which we hope are not just conditioning.

~ve : They can be positive, can't they? If... I mean, it's difficult to just think originally. It~s difficult to form your own ~i~WS, yO(A ~~.a something, a basis to start from.

S : That you have to be different is itself a 'miccha-ditthi'. Your views can coincide with the views of quite a number

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S(ctd) : of other people, but at least you've arrived at those views as a result of your own independent thought. It's not that you've got to have different views, that's going to the other extreme. You haven't got to be different, but at least you have to think for yourself. So you may end up agreeing on quite a number of issues with quite a number of other people, but that in itself doesn't make you a conformist. I fliean, what you have to avoid is adopting certain views simply as the result of group conditioning. Otherwise you presumably couldn't adopt any views at all, even provisionally, because it's highly unlikely that you'd be able to think of anything original that had never been thought of before by anybody. If you were

able to do that you'd be a genius! Some people are afraid of seeming not original. Again perhaps this is a 'miccha-ditthi' in the world of modern art, that you've got to be original at all ~osts, you've got to be different, you~ve got to have youY own ideas. It's very difficult to have your own ideas. The only valid sense in which ideas can be your own usually, is that at least you've thought them out for yourself, even though the conclusion~ actually, which you arrive at, art conclusions lots of other people have arrived at, do arrive at...

Punyavati : A friend recently pointed out this 'miccha-ditthi' to me about original views and he said, I learned from hiTh that you can share idea~ but t~~ expressions of ji~d~~d~a(~ are different. That other people's ideas can help to stimulate °o~r own ideas, thinking, ar~~ 4~v~~p our own ideas.

S : This is what is called in traditional language 'cinta-maya-prajna~'. There are three kinds of 'prajna' or wisdom, according to the Pali tradition. The 'suta-maya-pan~a', the 'pa~ha' that you develop as a result of simply listening, simply hearing or studying or reading. Then there's the 'panna' you develop by means of your own independent thought, re-flecting on what you've heard, r~flecting on what youvve read, really trying to understand it, trying to make it your own. This is ~cinta~maya~pann~a~, the wisdom that is developed through independent thinking. And then of course, ~bha~~ana~maya~pa~na~, the intuitive wisdom that comes about, that is developed through meditation.

Carla : Excuse me, what was the third one?

S : The 'bhavana- maya- pa~na', which I have called intuitive wisdom, the wisdom which comes about with the help of meditation. There is another current 'miccha-ditthi' that I've just thought of! Or at least it, s a 'micch-a-ditthi' to some extent. That to serve is degrading. Other than seting ~kat this is a ~mi~~h~~dit~h~~, in what sort of way does this arise?

Eve : Upon class- conditioning. S : Either for or against? Eve : Well, if you are born, I suppose, under a structure

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Eve(ctd) : which has certain classes, then ~o be of a certain class, a class which serves, makes you actually feel underneath, underneath the class above you, thereby giving you a feeling that you' re not as good as them.

S : Yes. That is to say you associate the act of serving with lowly social status. ~W~,at were you thinking, Teresa, the same thing or~~i~erent?

Teresa : NO~ I think I was thinking in terms of a sort of pride. That you? re not willing to give because somehow you feel it as lowering yourself, but it's a feeling of your own pride.

S : Yes. Again, this is something I've noticed in India. That in many cases people don't feel that serving is degrading, because sometimes it is degrading in India, especially in the case of people who are made to serve and to do nothing but serve just because they belong to a particular caste by birth. But apart from that, people in India don't usually feel that serving

others is degrading. They're delighted to serve. If you go as a guest to their house, the more they can serve you, the more happy they will be! Yes, the more they can wait upon you, the more they enjoy it. In many Indian households, the idea of a guest sitting down and eating with them is inconceivable because they should be busy serving you, not just sitting there and eating while you are eating. You've come to their house, so the whole family is sort of standing around serving you, bringing things from the kitchen and so on. The whole family, ten or twelve people sometimes, you're the only one to eat, they feel they must serve you. You see, far from feeling degraded, this is what they want ~~~~~~ they're performing a religious duty, they're proud to serve in that way, certainly happy to

serve in that way.

Eve . Does that apply to anybody in India? Would that apply to any of their friends or would that apply to a monk or...

S : That applies to a guest as such. If the guest happens to be a monk, well, another element enters into it, an element of religious devotion. But even in the case of an ordinary guest, people will take delight in serving them, even if the guest is not a monk. The same kind of attitude, to serve. And also with the elders. Younger people take delight in serving their elders.

sorry to say Whereas children in the West, I'm sure we've somehow imbibed the idea they shouldn't do anything for their parents, that it's some sort of reflection on their freedom and independence. It's not maybe always the same case, but this attitude is very common.

Stephanie I think it's because people don't feel free not to serve, so they don't feel free to. When you're talking about the children, I think they often feel pressured. "Go and get me this!" They haven't been able to do it willingly and I think that goes through in a lot of social

situations, so people have a bad association with it.

S : We assume in that case, that haven't brought the that/Parents

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S(ctd) : children up skilfully enough. Because I've seen that in Indian families usually, although there are exceptions, but usually, certainly in traditional Indian families, children are happy to do what they're asked to do. If the father or mother says: "Go and get 50-Q~~~S0 for me," they'll just run quite happily and get that. It's a pleasure for them to do that.

Stephanie : I expect the parents feel happy about asking them. I think in our culture we don't like to serve, so we don't like to ask either~ and the children pick that up.

S : Yes, because maybe There we get this feeling of independence. Well, you get this very strongly some- times in this culture with old people. They resent people doing things for them. "I can get on quite well on my own, I don't want anyone to do anything for me. I'm quite independent, thank you." That's their attitude.

Perhaps they're afraid of feeling obligated as well.

S . Oh, yes, there is that. Oh, es! They don't like to accept anything, some of themj~W~~ey say: "It will put me under an obligation." They want to maintain this rather precarious sort of pseudo-independence that you shouldn't be obligated to anybody. Well: "I don't want to be beholden to anybody," they sometimes say.

Stephanie : There's the assumption that nobody does anything for nothing.

S : That's true, yes. Another 'miccha-ditthi'

Stephanie : That comes through in tipping actually. Because if you get served well in a restaurant, I always go through hell because I always think, well, in a way I don't want to not tip, but I don't want to tip either. And you start counting up what they've done and wondering whether to give them a tip or not!

Q S . We seem to have got ourselves into~rather unhealthy state in some aspects of our social life. Nobody does anything except for money~ is really a dreadful sort of attitude. That people are always in it for what they can get out of it.

Punyavati : And if you do something sincerely~ people become very suspicious as well, and that puts you off from doing it again.

S . I don't know how all this sort of started, because one doesn't find it in all cultures~ certainly. Anyway, we just have to keep a sharp look out for it and not fall victim to these sort of attitudeS, to these sort of 'miccha-ditthis' Alright, perhaps we should go on, maybe we've warned enough against 'miccha-ditthis' now. Let's go on to section six.

Trish : "The Buddha said: "If a man has all kinds of faults and does not regret them, in the space of a moment

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Trish(ctd) : retribution will suddenly fall upon him and, as water returning to the sea, will gradually become deeper and wider. (But), if a man has faults and, becoming aware of them, changes for the better, retribution will melt away into nothingness of its own accord, as the danger of a fever gradually abates once perspiration has set in."

S : So, what sort of situation is envisaged here? One might say, in a way, it's natural to have faults. It's natural to make mistakes. It's natural sometimes to commit unskilful actions

and if you do, of course, well, you'll experience the result of that if you do. I don't regret them. It's as if the Buddha is saying, you may make mistakes and you may have all kinds of faults, you may perform unskillful actions, but at least as soon as you perform the unskillful action, well, for heaven's sake, realise what you've done and feel sorry for that, regret that, repent of that, resolve not to do that again. If you can do that, well then in that case, retribution won't overtake you. Not that you won't have to suffer on account of that particular fault, that particular unskillful action, but at least you've checked the process. Whereas if you hadn't realised what you were doing, if you'd just gone repeating the unskillful action, well, retribution can pile up and overtake you. It cannot but go on becoming deeper and wider, so to speak, just like the river when it nears the sea. So this in some ways connects with what we were saying earlier about feeling guilty. Yes, if you do perform an unskillful action, the sooner you feel guilty about it the better. If that means that you really see that you have performed an unskillful action and you regret that and repent of that, in the sense of feeling remorse and undertaking not to commit that action again, that's the very least you can do. To admit your mistakes and act upon the realisation that you've committed a mistake. That's sometimes quite difficult, isn't it? Here's another 'miccha-ditthi', hm? The 'miccha-ditthi' is that nobody ever commits mistakes. They're all part of your growth and development and it's good to make mistakes. It's good to make mistakes because you learn in that way. You see, that's another, a very current 'miccha-ditthi', isn't it? That people don't like to admit that actually they made a mistake. They shouldn't have done it. It's as though they can't bring themselves to admit that. They have to make it into a . . . well, if they can't make it into a virtue, well, at least it's part of their experience. It all contributes to their growth, development and maturity and so on and so forth. You see how people try to salvage things in this sort of way, salvage their pride.

Stephanie : It is quite hard to know, though, isn't it? really, if the result is something bad. You might feel bad about something and you might say, well, my state of mind was quite bad after that, so perhaps that was wrong, but I find it difficult to judge any other way and sometimes that isn't infallible anyway.

S : Sometimes you might say that on account of an unskillful action you got into a certain positive situation, but

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S(ctd) : that does not mean that the unskillful action was not in fact unskillful, that therefore you shouldn't have performed it. Let's try to think of an example. Well, for instance, walking along the street you might have an argument with someone, you're really angry with him and you're so angry you give him a blow and knock him over, but at that moment a car happened to be passing by. If you hadn't knocked him over, he would have been run over by the car. So you might say it was good, it was a skillful action that I knocked him over, because if I hadn't done that he would have been run over by the car, but that is false reasoning. It was an unskillful action because your intention was not to save him from being run over by a car. The action was an expression of an unskillful mental state, namely anger, and the fact that the outcome of the action was fortunate rather than unfortunate doesn't alter the fact that your original action was unskillful and not skillful.

Stephanie : Would you say an unskillful action was one that came out of an unskillful state of mind?

S : This is the usual Buddhist criterion, yes.

Stephanie : But I feel I have to think about its result as well. I don't, as it were, separate them.

S : The traditional Buddhist view would be, that in the long run an unskilful action never has any except an unpleasant consequence. A consequence which is painful rather than pleasant and vice versa. You could have pleasurable experiences which are not the result of skilful actions but you cannot have unskilful actions which do not result in unpleasant experiences. Do you see the distinction? You can have pleasurable or painful experiences which are not the outcome of skilful or unskilful actions respectively, but you cannot perform skilful or unskilful actions and not as a result experience either pleasurable or painful experiences.

Stephanie : So if, whenever we consider ourselves to be in an unskilful state of mind, we decide not to act on that, that would be it, we wouldn't do any unskilful actions.

S : Yes. At least you would contain the unskilfulness. At least it would be limited to your mental state. Well of course it does affect your overall condition, you wouldn't make matters worse by giving expression verbally or in terms of action to that unskilful mental state. In Buddhism, thinking unskilful thoughts counts as mental action, so there are karmic consequences for that, but it's less serious than if the unskilful mental state found expression in words or in overt action, bodily action. As when you feel like murdering somebody, well, that is an unskilful mental state and yes, there will be a karmic consequence of that of an unpleasant nature, but it's much worse if you give verbal expression to your desire to murder somebody or if you actually carry it out in fact, by means of a bodily action.

Noel : Would that be a kind of situation where confession would be . . .

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S : Yes, confession is clearly indicated here. When the Buddha speaks of regret, yes, this implies confession. Here again, it's as though it's not enough to feel regret within your mind. You have to express it. You purge it in that way much more satisfactorily. You confess, you give expression to your regret for what you've done to, say, your spiritual friends.

Anne . can sometimes help as well to perform some kind of symbolic action to

S : Yes, yes, indeed. Sometimes at the end of retreats people write (down unskilful actions on a piece of paper and throw it into the bonfire, at the same time resolving you are not going to do that again, you're going to put it completely behind you. You're going to make a fresh start. Turn over not just a new page, but maybe start a completely new volume! But ~o come back to something I mentioned a little while ago: this reluctance of people to admit that they've

made a mistake, even to themselves. To want to turn it into a sort of non-mistake or not to recognise that it's a mistake. When they say it's a stage in their development or a necessary part of their experience, It 'S as though They don't want to admit, and it's not simply a~w~ys just pride, it's al', ~tnot liking to think that they6 wasted any part of their life, that every- thing must serve a purpose. They don't like to think, well, they wasted five years of their life, they like to think even that was useful somehow, it sort of contribute~ to their growth, even though they spent those five years in a completely unskilful manner. They don't like to think, they can't face up to the fact that they wasted a part of their life or ~~~or all practical purposes those years had just been written off. Maybe it's like when you lose money. You don't like to think, well, you just lost it, you like to sort of rationalise it, well, I suppose it was for some good purpose etc. etc. But of course sometimes it may be difficult to know, as you said, whether something really falls into this category or that. Whether something hasn't helped in the long run. But then, that is very of itself because you can't really decide whether the action was skilful or unskilful.

: If your intention was good, if you were trying to do something skilful and then it turns out to be a terrible mistake, does~~~ that make a difference?

S : There is a proverb that the path to hell is paved with good intentions. Buddhism would say that good intentions, in the sense of just wanting to do good, or wishing to do good and perhaps having a very vague idea of what good was anyway, is not enough. But goodness and the good intentions necessarily involve an element of awareness and skill.

Sulocana : W~~" forced to act in some situation and you chose the wrong action~

S : If you're in a situation where you're forced to act, that is to say genuinely forced and you're not rationalising

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S(ctd) : anything, well, it may be you perform the wrong action and then you can't~Ce~ held responsible. There may be an emergency, maybe someone is dying, you are the only person on the spot, maybe you've no medical knowledge, you just have to do the best you can. You don't know whether the person ought to be turned over or whether he ought to be helped up or you don't know what's going to do good, you don't know what's going to do harm. Well, you do the best you can. You have to do something in that circumstance. If you don't do something, well, that's also doing something. You see what I mean? So you just have to do your best. You're not responsible if things do go wrong then, in those sort of circumstances. ot~Qr And very often where~human beings are concerned - this introduces a new aspect to the question - very often you don't know what is best and the

only thing that you can do very often is just to keep away, not to interfere, just leave them alone. Of course, sometimes you can't do that, as for instance when you've got children. Sometimes you don't know what is best for your children, you just don't. It may be because they're of such a nature, or the situation is such for one reason or another, you don't know what is best for them, but you've got to do something and even your not doing anything is a doing something. Whether to send them to this school or that school, to be a bit stricter or a bit less strict. Whether the net result is going to be good or bad, very often you don't know. You can only do your best according to your lights. If things go wrong, you're not to blame and you shouldn't blame yourself. Because where other human beings are concerned, you can't really calculate, you don't really know very often. In the case of adults very often, at least you can steer clear, not get in their way, let them make their own decisions. But if there are people dependent on you in some way, because they're sick or for some other reason, or because they're children or because they're your children, well, you have to do something, but you don't know what the results of your actions are going to be. So under those circumstances, well, yes, you can say, well, I did my best. My intentions were good, but unfortunately things did not turn out as I had hoped. But you shouldn't blame yourself then. There is this story, which I have quoted sometimes, of the Buddha who taught the meditation on death to some disciples and then went away, leaving them to get on with it, and when he came back he found they had committed suicide. It wasn't the right meditation for them. Even the Buddha didn't know that. It's impossible to fathom another person's mind. You can't be sure that you're saying the right thing or doing the right thing. And when you enter into things like human relationships, well, it's terribly complicated. You don't know very often what's the right thing to do or the right thing to say. Supposing someone is very upset. What should you do? Should you go and give them a big hug or should you say, well, never mind, or should you say, well, snap out of it, come off it: You don't know sometimes what is the right thing to say, what is going to produce the right sort of effect. Alright, you keep quiet, you don't say anything.

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S(ctd) : ~~~ maybe they were just wanting you to say something, anything, or maybe the worst thing you could possibly have done was not to () Anyway, how did we get on to that? This is all very true, isn't it? I think we should be very conscious, much more conscious than we often are, of how delicate and how easily disrupted is the machinery, so to speak, of another person. I'm sometimes horrified, even within the context of the Friends, at the ease with which people give advice to other people. I think very carefully before giving anybody any advice, but some of our friends sometimes hand out advice with the greatest of confidence, a confidence which I personally very rarely feel, even in the case of people I know very well. So just realise that other human beings are very delicate. Be careful how you handle them. I don't mean that you should be precious about it. I don't mean that they are like pieces of valuable porcelain that can hardly be touched, no. But be careful. Don't interfere, at least avoid that. Realise that what you say and what you do may be affecting them, almost certainly will affect them. And think before you say something or do something. Try to behave with awareness of them, realising that people are very vulnerable. Even some of the people who look strong and impervious. You know, sometimes they may be quite sensitive people. hurt Trish : Probably the ones who are the most.

S . Anyway, back to the text As soon as you do become conscious that you have

actually committed an unskilful action, assuming that it's clear to you that the action is really unskilful, that it's not an undecided or ambiguous case, well, admit it to yourself, admit it to other people, then resolve that you're not going to commit that mistake again and don't be ashamed to do so.

Punyavati : I think often we're frightened of admitting mistakes because assuming () ideal being perfect and try to give the impression of being perfect before we actually have become perfect. It's difficult to be....

S : There is again this whole question of setting an example. Whether it's an example to your children or whether, if you're an Order Member setting an example to Mitras, or if you're a Mitra setting an example to Friends etc. I think one has to watch this. You should set an example in a real way, but not in an unreal way. Do you see the point of the distinction? You shouldn't act just so as to set an example, you should genuinely want to be a certain kind of person. And at the same time you cannot help recognising that that does have an effect on other people, so that in a real way you set an example. But 'set an example' is quite a different thing from keeping up a pretence. If you're an Order Member, yes, you should set an example that means not pretending to be better than you are. It means being as good as you possibly can be. And just being open-I think that confession is appropriate here - to other people. Let them see you as you are. As good as you are, as bad as you are.

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Elsie : It's being honest with yourself.

S : Yes, being honest. With yourself first and then with other people. You cannot be honest with other people unless you're first honest with yourself.

Teresa : Does the whole idea of duty come in here?

S : Again, maybe there's another 'miccha-ditthi' here. That 'duty' is a dirty word. Some people don't like the idea of duty. They don't find that duty is at all a beautiful word. They think it rather an ugly little word. It sort of stops them doing what they want to do and makes them feel guilty about it. But do you think the word duty can be understood positively? Or is it really essentially a nasty sort of concept?

It can be in terms of responsibility.

S . Yes, you see your responsibility.

Teresa : It's much more a sense of care then. You want to fulfill that rather than it's a cardboard cut-out () acting ()

S : We say parents have a duty towards their children. Well, this means that they have a responsibility and if they love their children, well of course they'll feel that responsibility and carry out that duty. If they don't love their children, well, clearly something has gone seriously wrong somewhere along the line. If you're a parent and don't love your children, well, clearly you're a bit of a psychological case. One might say it's a natural thing to love

your children. I~~ s a natural thing for children to love their parents. If there is a situation in which it doesn't happen, which unfortunately is the case very often in the West, well, something has gone seriously wrong with the very basis of social life.

Stephanie : If somebody experiences something as a duty~ though, it's as though they've got a bit alienated from the feelings behind it or the vision behind it. Because if you naturally respond, for example, to children, you don't think in terms of your duty. It's only when you're trying to get some external framework for what you see needs to be done. It's when you're not sure whether you've got the choice or not, I think. I think that's why people dislike it.

S : Yes, duty is something you're told you ought to do. One ought to want to do.

Stephanie : You see it as coming from outside you.

S : Yes, well, there is that line of Wordsworth: Duty~ ~Stern daughter of the voice of God."

I was thinking of the Brownie motto.

S : What is the Brownie motto? I've never been in the Brownies.

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"Do your duty to God and the Queen." S : "Do your duty to God and the Queen." Carla : "I promise to do my duty to God and the country."

S : Is that the American version? You don't have a queen there, do you? So, "The Buddha said: "If a man has all kinds of faults and does not regret them,".. there's another point here. Some people glory in their faults, don't they? "The Buddha said: "If a man has all kinds of faults".. I don't know how literally that is to be taken. I assume it applies to women too. "If a man has all kinds of faults and does not regret them . ~lorrying in your faults is the opposite extreme. Some people do pride themselves on their unskilful actions. What do you think is behind it? Is it actually a wrong sense of values? Or do they really see that something is unskilful, but at the same time, in a perverse sort of way, pride themselves on their unskilful actions? What do you think happens?

That must be true in some cases. I think for young people particularly.

S . You actually pride yourself on something which you know is unskilful.

To stop other people from blaming you perhaps.

S : Ah. Perhaps that's true. Perhaps it is sort of over-

defensive. Can you give any examples?

Stephanie : Do people really pride themselves on something which they really see as unskilful? Or is it more that they pride themselves on taboo-breaking or acting in an individualistic way? Because if they really sawt~%bhere would be bad consequences for themselves, I don't think they'd be proud of that unless they really hated themselves.

Eve : What about these gangs that go around beating up one another? They really like get this whole feeling ~f aren't we wonderful if we can do in the skinheads. s~~~;~ ~eydLo~t see ~tnt ~cr~ ~£ co~stqL&~~J ~~ So do£q'~ se~ it2s L&~skiI~t S . They don't see it as unskilful. I think in some cases they don't even see the consequences as painful. They don't see getting locked up for the night by the police as painful~~~~~' that's the sort of thing that happens to heroes. We're heroes, we're in the cells overnight.

Trish : And if they're fairly young, the physical consequences of, say, getting into lots of drugs or alcohol or something isn't that (). They can keep doing that for a while ~q~~.~~.

S : Right. Because it comes back to the old Socratic question of whether anybody actually does evil knowing and thinking that what they are doing is evil. Accordiug to Christian theology, only the devil does that. Only the devil does evil because it is evil. Human he{ngs normally do something which is evil,

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S(ctd) : thinking that it is good. Would you agree with that?

Stephanie : Certainly deluding themselves that it's alright at least.

S : At least that, yes. The ends j us t i fy the means.

S : The ends justify the means. There's been a bit of discussion in the newspaper recently about the 'just' war. Both the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster have convinced them- selves that there is such a thing as a just war. Well, some people would regard that as deluding themselves. In other words, they've convinced themselves that under certain ci'cumstances what in other circumstances would be called killing, not to say murder, is justified. So in that way, no doubt people who are in some ways good and worthy people can convince themselves that actions which flormally are regarded as unskilful or which other people regard as unskilful under certain circumstances are not unskilful. There's almost endless scope for self-delusion.

Carla : So many things seem so clear, but yet when it actually comes to it, very often actions are partly based on skilful motives and partly unskilful. Most of the time T c~~t

S : Human beings are very mixed creatures. They're a mixture of all sorts of skilful and all sorts of unskilful mental factors. What we have to try to do is to sort out the unskilful from the skilful so that the skilful predominates and we act predominantly from that, and we can only do that if we think honestly and sincerely. But here of course the situation is envisaged in which one actually does recognise one's faults as faults, one's unskilful actions as really unskilful and you regret them and you maybe confess them and you resolve you are not going to do them again. In that way, the situation doesn't get worse. Sometimes, even if you are honest it's difficult to know whether your mental state or your action was actually unskilful or not, irrespective of consequences.

Teresa . Would it be, say, all the first precept that if your action did harm somebody

S . Well, certainly that would be one criterion in which your action did harm to yourself or to others or to both. But even there might be scope for 'miocha- ditthis

You don't know what the effect is.

Stephanie : If we were really aware of our states of mind, then we would know when we were in an unskilful one. We could avoid acting from that.

S : Yes. If your criterion was clear, your criterion of what constitutes a skilful or an unskilful mental state.

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S(ctd) : Take the example of anger. There's a bit of discussion about that. If you are angry, if you feel angry, is that a skilful mental state or an unskilful mental state? Some people say it's a good thing to feel your anger, to experience your anger, but is that so or is it not?

Teresa . It depends if you actually direct it at someone and you can feel the anger but you don't.

S : Supposing you just feel it, experience it. Is that skilful or unskilful?

Stephanie : If we're able to transform it, then we should do that, but if we can't then we've just got the anger anyway, so there's nothing to do. You can't wish it away or pretend it's not there.

S : You could also say it's a question of comparison. That maybe to experience your anger is more skilful than to block it off and not experience it at all, but to simply experience your anger within yourself is more skilful than to express it in such a way that somebody else suffers from it.

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Teresa : . . . to tell them the effect it's had because you don't think ~~~ t~at ~a~ ~e~(~&it~ pCSLtL'VC.

S : Expressing your anger is a different thing from telling somebody about your anger. These are two quite different things. If you feel angry with someone and you should let fly at them, well, that is expressing your anger; but if you say, well, look here, I'm just feeling very angry about that, if you say that in a reasonable sort of way, if you can, that is not unskilful. You are not expressing your anger, you're merely telling somebody else the fact that you feel or have felt anger. That is a rather different thing, in fact, quite a different thing.

Eve . So it seems that the last one has a certain objectivity...

S . Yes, yes. You're not communicating the anger itself, you're communicating the fact of your anger. You're not giving direct expression to the anger. So there's an element of self-control present, an element of awareness, an element of consideration for the other person, also honesty and openness of communication.

Eve : You make it seem so easy!

S . That's certainly much better than just letting fly at the other person ctn£I letting hint find out about your anger in that rather painful fashion.

Teresa : What about a politician, i.e. say, Mrs. Thatcher~W~o~

S : Poor Mrs. Thatcher!

Teresa . who's in a situation where she's standing up and saying she's protecting our boys, English people, and yet she's using aggression on other people. I don't know, it's hard to imagine ~hat her state of mind is. In a sense it's got to be put ()

S : Perhaps it isn't very difficult to imagine what her state of mind is. Why, she doesn't seem at all happy these days. She doesn't look happy in the photographs one sees of her. If you hear her on the radio, she sounds quite shaken. She certainly doesn't seem to be enjoying life jfl ari~ slay.

Stephanie : She's in a situation where she can only manoeuvre things, she can't control

things really. She can only make the best of a very tricky situation.

S : Because, after all, if you are a Prime Minister at all, well, that means you are in a certain position, you've no freedom. No wonder the rather wary Mr. ~0ot didn't accept her invitation to private consultations. He wanted to be taking his freedom, if not of action, at least of comment. Just one more point before we go on to the next section. We've talked about the difficulty - sometimes of knowing whether our own mental states are really either skilful or unskilful because sometimes they're so mixed, anyway, it's sometimes very difficult to take an overall view

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S(ctd) : and to know whether or not all your attitude is skilful or whether on the whole it's unskilful. So when it's so difficult even in one's own case to determine that, what about other people? That is to say, isn't it really difficult very often to determine whether other people are acting with a predominantly unskilful mental state. Very often we just can't (understand?) it. So I mention this because it brings us to something quite important, something I~a~ I commented on before, which is that only too often people are very ready to attribute motives and usually unskilful motives, especially when somebody criticises them. Do you see what I mean? Sometimes one attributes motives as a means of deflecting criticism. In other words, instead of discussing or considering the criticism on its own merits, you question the motive of the person making the criticism and in that way avoid the criticism. You say, well, I think you're just jealous of me, or I think you're just angry, or I think you're just in a negative state today, and in that way you sort of turn the criticism aside. So this is why I've sometimes said that if anyone does make any criticism of you, whatever you may feel privately about their motives, ignore that. Just consider the criticism itself, whether it's justified or whether it's not justified. If the criticism is made in a meeting especially, if you do feel quite sincerely that someone has misunderstood you or in fact the criticism has proceeded from an unskilful mental state, don't say so at the time. At the time just deal with the criticism itself quite objectively and if you think it necessary, take that person aside afterwards in a positive sort of a way and just try to discuss the matter. I think this is quite important, whether you're functioning, say, within a meeting of the Order, or a Council meeting or a Co-op meeting. I think this is very, very important, that criticisms of any kind are always considered just on their own merits, and any alleged unskilful motives are dealt with quite separately, independently, on a suitable occasion, privately.

Noel . So it's being aware of your own possible reactivity in that situation.

S : Yes, yes. Sometimes of course, I have even heard this expression, that if someone makes a criticism, that is taken to be, ipso facto, an expression of negativity. That is to say, someone makes a criticism and someone else just says: "Oh, you're just being negative," Well, perhaps they are, but nonetheless, you should just consider the criticism on its own merits, at least initially, and deal with the question of alleged motive or state of mind quite separately. Otherwise, issues only become confused.

Eve : So in effect there~~ sort of two things going on, aren't there? There's, like, the

criticism and the motive. And so it's quite clear thinking to separate all that's actually happening.

S : Right. Of course, it may be that someone is in a very negative mental state, a very unskilful state, but nonetheless, the criticism is justified

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S(ctd) : and is quite valid. So you should not use the fact, even the actual fact, that the criticism is made by some- one in an unskilful mental state. You shouldn't use that as an excuse for rejecting or refusing to consider the criticism.

Punyavati : Sometimes the criticiser is accused of projecting their own shortcomings on other people.

S : All that is interpretation and attribution of motives. It's a sort of pseudo-psychological objection. Oh, you're just projecting! Perhaps you are. So what! But let the point which is being made be considered on its own merits, without bringing in all this pseudo-psychological jargon, which is perhaps highly defensive on your part. Otherwise you get mutual accusations flying back and forth. "Oh, you 're projecting." "Oh, you ' re being very defensive." "No, I'm not." "You're just in a mental state." "No, I'm not." "You're not committed." For heaven's sake, just be objective. Just consider objectively what is being said. Anyway, that was just, in a way, in addition to the discussion of that previous section, section six. Let's go on to section seven now.

° "The Buddha said:"If an evil man, on hearing what is good, comes and creates a disturbance, you should hold your peace. You must not angrily upbraid him; then he who has come to curse you will merely harm himself."

S : What do you think of this? "If an evil man, on hearing what is good, comes and creates a disturbance, you should hold your peace. You must not angrily upbraid him; then he who has Come to curse you will merely harm hitnself." What is the principle here?

Teresa . Not getting involved in that person's (

S : Not getting involved, not making things worse than they already are.

Sulocana : Why should he hate good? Why should he hate something good?
~er~a~s S : Well, obviously he doesn' t/consider it as good. He might consider it as something bad. That might be his delusion.
So he comes and creates a disturbance. We have had this sort of experience from time to time in our classes and centres. Some maybe Seventh Day Adventist or Jehovah's Witness or Moon~~ comes along to create a disturbance. I~~e had this experience a couple of times and other people have had this too. So they create a disturbance by asking all sorts of leading questions and trying to get a discussion going about Jesus and all that sort of thing.

The Buddha here says: "You should hold your peace." I don't think that this should be taken to mean you shouldn't under any say anything, but you must be very, very careful. "You must not angrily upbraid him." Because then you'll just make matters worse. "Then he who has come to curse you will merely harm himself."

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S(ctd) : Well, he's already doing harm to himself but don't make the situation worse by doing harm to yourself because of that. At least let the harm be confined to him, not because you hate him but because, well, there's nothing that you can do about that end of the situation. But if you can't speak in a friendly, soothing sort of way, well, juSt hold your peace, don't say anything at all. Sometimes one does find this in human relationships generally. Sometimes there are circumstances or there are times whe~ the less said the better. Sometimes even someone who may be even normally near and dear to you just gets into such a terrible state of mind that there's nothing you can say to help. Whatever you say just seems to make things worse. So what can you do exccept just keep quiet? O~~o(ArS~ that also may upset them but at least you ha~en' t said anything they can actually take hold of and get even more angry about. So this is a great part of sort of practical worldly wisdom; knowing when you when you shouldn't say anything, when you should just keep quiet, at least not make the situation worse. If necessary just walk away and leave that particular person to come to his or her own senses. Sometimes it's very difficult if you 're sort of personally stung or if you feel what the other person is saying is completely unjustified or you' re being misunderstood. It's very easy just to retort and get into an argument~ ~erl a bad~unpleasant argument. Very often it's better just to keep quiet and say nothing. It's sometimes£ very difficult because - your natural tendency~to retort.

Annie : What if you can't be quiet?

S . Well, if you can't be quiet, how is it that you can't be quiet? What has happened?

Annie : Because you feel threatened....

S : Maybe you feel threatened. Maybe your own unskilful mental state is very strong. Well, if you can't keep quiet, well you can~t~ There's no question. You'll not keep quiet.

You're the angry one.

S : You'll be angry~ as the other person is, and the situation will become worse.

Eve : That's the difficulty with negative emotions, especially things like anger, because it seems to just touch that in you very quickly.

S : Yes, yes. Waiting to be sparked off. So one rrtta~t just try to be mindful and possibly just remove yourself from the situation. Otherwise things may well get worse. But don't you actually find this with people? That it's sometimes better just to keep quiet, to hold your peace, not to make things worse than they are and just hope that after a while that person will return to their senses and be sorry for what they've been doing or saying and feel regret

and then just sort of make it up with you.

Teresa : There are also times when people are annoying and it

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Teresa(ctd) : seems that they V re just sort of trying you and then in a way you have to be firm, but they're waiting, it seems like they want a reaction.

S : I saw this in a particular instance not so long ago. I knew that somebody had a sort of, well, almost pattern, of being or making himself rejected and I could see him behaving in such a way as to get other people to reject him and, sure enough, they rose to the bait. They immediately did the v4~~~thing that he was inviting them t0~ and sort of ~p%~de~ in such a way that, yes, he was rejected and could feel rejected. And it was amazing to see how they were quite unable to see what was happening and to resist that. They fell right into the trap. So I think we must be careful of this. Sometimes people may be provoking you to behave in that unusual way and sometimes it may happen you see this, but you still can't help yourself behaving in that particular way. It does sort of spark off something in you. You just have to be very, very aware all the time, and not only that but take precautions even earlier on to ensure that you're always in a positive state, that you don't react in that kind of way.

Punyavati : Sometimes if people think that Buddhists are passive kind of people, they try to provoke you as well in arguments.

S : Yes. Sometimes it isn't enough to be long-suffering, you must be active, even assertive, in a positive sort of way. Gther~wiS~, if you just sort of bow your head and bear it all, you may end up feeling a bit resentful. You have to take, perhaps, early on in the proceedings, some positive action to affect the situation in a positive sort of way. Not just sort of stand there, listening to it all. Tus~ say: "OK-, I'm going to make a cup of tea," in a happy, cheerful tone of voice and go up and make it. In that way, get out of the situation.

Elsie : It's being aware and skilful in dealing with the present situation as it is.

S : Yes. As it is. But also for seeing that certain situations may arise and preparing yourself for them. Making sure that you are in a positive frame of mind, ideally, all the time. This is where the importance of regular meditation comes in. Because certainly that contributes to your positivity during the day.

Ann : It's going one stage further back in the process. Once you've got the unskilful mental emotion, you've got it and you can try to convert it, but if you can create situations where it won't arise, then you've gone back a little further.

S : Yes, that's even better. But I've also noticed (this is a bit incidental), that there are certain occasions on which you're more likely to be irritable or be affected by other people's irritability, and one of them is when you V re tired. When you V re physically tired or a bit worn out, you should watch yourself then. You should be very careful of your reactions when

you're tired and not go into any sort of crucial situations. When you're

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S(ctd) : tired you're much more likely to snap at people that normally you wouldn't snap at. Don't you find this? So don't allow yourself to get too tired. Certainly if you know that you're going to encounter certain situations, or be in certain situations, it's not wise. Well, it's not wise anyway to be too tired, not to be really exhausted so that you really no control over yourself.

Trish : It's basically having metta for yourself. S : Right, yes, indeed.

Marlene : What if, when the evil man is creating a disturbance, it involves a third person being harmed? Do you still hold your peace then?

S : Here, it would seem that the Buddha is referring to a verbal disturbance of the peace, so alright, you hold your peace. Alright, supposing they're creating a disturbance of another kind, well, how are you going to behave then? Well, first of all you must not be behaving in such a way as to make things worse. You might see two people fighting. Alright, you might, with the best of intentions, try to intervene. They might both turn on you--beat you up between them because it's a private fight and a third party is not supposed to interfere. But there might be other situations where it's more clear cut as when a mother~0 d~s~;~a,~e a child cJlit' it ma~~~~t~ eQihr own c0hi~d,~T ey ~~~~~n%t~fl~you, so again you have to consider, but, well, yes, there might be certain circumstances when you really should intervene, but clearly you have to do so as mindfully as you can. Intervene in such a way that you really do prevent whatever harm is being done and not make the situation worse. ~oa may overreact sometimes.

Marlene : I was thinking of the sort of situation where officials of a government are physically harming their own people in their country and my reaction to that is to want to help. Well, the way I help isn't a violent way, but how I feel is angry on hearing about what's happening.

S : Well, in a way, that's a natural human reaction, but one just has to be careful that one doesn't act simply out of that, the ordinary human reaction. It isn't easy to intervene in quite complicated, especially political, situations in such a way that you're going to do good rather than harm. Sometimes it's very difficult to know what to do. That's part of the unpleasantness of the whole situation. It's not even clear how one can help.

Marlene : Is feeling anger in that situation alright, and natural, or is feeling anger always wrong?

S : I think it's natural, but whether it's skilful is another matter. For instance, I'm thinking about Vietnam. How did all the trouble start in Vietnam? Well, it started with the opposition of quite a lot of people to the Diem regime. That was certainly a terrible regime in many ways. But I'm afraid it wasn't as bad as the regime that they have now. So there were certain quite good and quite honest people who opposed the Diem

ed overt row and that S(ctd) : regime~~~~~ntribut in ~~t~~ptS~5~nt situation which ~r~5t~~~~W~~~I~ nA~aI'~ ~.

would seem to be worse than the situation which was originally obtaining. So, unfortunately, one can't always be sure that one's no doubt well-motivated actions won't result in a situation being madeont~w~:worse than it was originally.

Teresa . You once said that in order to practi~e non-violence, you have to be cunning. I think that was the word you used.

S : I'm not sure if I'd said it with regard just to non- violence. No, I think it was something like this: I said you can only, I quoted somebody as saying that you can only afford to be as harmless as the dove if you also have the wisdom of the serpent. Otherwise, if you've just got harmlessness and innocence, well, you won't survive very long in this wicked world. You need a certain amount of artfulness and guile as well, just to survive and not be violent in a violent world, and not be overwhelmed and crushed at the same time. I remember in my own case, years ago in India, working the ex-Untouchable Buddhists after the death of Dr. Ambedkar. There were several small local politicians who were trying to finish me off. They didn't like me and the influence that I was having. They wanted that they should have all the influence, so I couldn't oppose them openly; that would not have been very wise; but I certainly didn't intend going under. I certainly intended exerting my influence and continuing to exert it, so I had to be quite guileful! So the net result is that whenever I go to India now and I go around among these people, yes, I get a very good reception and my influence continues to increase. Whereas most of them have fallen by the wayside and are being, in many cases, vilified by the people who used to follow them. So you can only aff r to ~ve the innocence of the dove - I won't claim to havej ~~~ac n~ocence of the dove, I won't claim to have had exactly the wisdom of the serpent, but I had a certain amount of innocence and a certain amount of guile in combination, therefore I survived, relatively speaking. This is really true. One should think a thousand before interfering 0 ts~tc~~) situation. You intervening in any comp~ic te political can easily do more harm than good. But sometimes it's very difficult not to do anything. You feel like doing something, all your instincts are to intervene, to take sides. This tendency of taking sides is very strong indeed. To want to be on this side or0t1hat side, but any side, in a sense it almost doesn't matter which side as long as you are on a side and can give vent to your strong emotions. Sometimes it's a matter of accident almost, which side you~ re on.

Trish : Does this connect up with the levels of giving, Bhante? It says that one should give on a physical plane at first because most people are not receptive or () give on higher levels.

S : I'm not quite sure what you're asking.

Trish : Well, it seems one of the criteria is whether you can give in a situation and often if you think you understand

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Trish(ctd) : it, you want to give in a totally inappropriate way.

S Yes. Right. Yes, if you see somebody who is starving, well, it's a simple decision, no doubt, to give food. Some people might question whether you really are doing any good. Whether it was really doing any good just to keep, for instance, that person alive for another day. Wouldn't it be better just to let that person die and not prolong his agony? So even giving a simple thing like food isn't completely free from difficulties. But obviously it's a much simpler question than a much more complex one, like giving advice, or trying to advise someone how to perhaps order their whole life, or you'll be giving medical advice. Sometimes I've been horrified by the attitude of doctors who seem to hand out pills and prescriptions with the greatest of ease and with hardly a thought. They don't really know what they're doing. They don't. I was in Bombay just recently and I was staying in a dreadful sort of place (that's another story!) but I was not feeling at all well~ and usually if I'm not feeling physically well, I avoid doctors. I go to them as an absolutely last resort,~preferably to someone whom I know personally so that I can actually discuss what is wrong with me and understand the treatment that I am being given. I'm deeply suspicious about doctors. But anyway, some well-meaning friends of mine, Indian Buddhists, they brought along a doctor, their doctor. I don't know what sort of doctor he was, I trust he was a qualified, not that that necessarily helps, but anyway. He was a very, very self-confident little man. He sort of bounced in and they hardly had time to introduce him as their doctor, he seized my wrist and listened to my pulse. At once he got out his pencil and pad~he was writing prescriptions and my friends went and got the stuff and they brought it back and he sort of stood over me, well, he didn't wake me, but he actually put the pill into my mouth, so out of politeness I swallowed it! It was an antibiotic. I didn't want to hurt his feelings or the feelings of the friends who brought him, so I swallowed this antibiotic. The result was that night I was really ill and I know it was the result of the medicine. He didn't really know what he was doing, he didn't know the effect it would have on my system. He had no acquaintance with my system. It was really irresponsible that he should have doctored me in that sort of way and he said: "I assure you, you'll be quite alright within two days." He said: "I guarantee it." Of course, the foolish man, he couldn't guarantee it and I wasn't well within two days. I was ill for another week or so. But I thought this pseudo-confidence on the part of these pseudo-professional people is really abominable.~this is not uncharacteristic of a lot of people in a lot of walks of life. They really think they know. They really think that they've got all the answers. They rush in, whether it's doctors, lawyers, politicians or whatever, more often than not they make things worse. So one should resist them. Maybe I was weak there, you see. I thought I shouldn't have bad feelings. Well, what about () feelings? What about my physical state? I should have perhaps been much more strong-minded and not bothered about hurting their wretched feelings. So this is perhaps a case of a weakness masquerading as a

S(ctd) : virtue. It wasn't a virtue at all. I should have put my foot down and thrown the blessed medicine out of the window, and maybe the doctor after the medicine.' I shall never do that again. I should have wriggled out of it somehow. But one really sees so much of this. This sort of false confidence based on very little knowledge. But such confidence.' This is what amazes me.

Eve . In a sense, I suppose it depends on ignorance, or other people's ignorance of not actually knowing what...

S : It's as though the more ignorant people are, the more confident they feel in their knowledge. People who really know a lot are not over-confident people because they understand the complexity of situations.

Christina : There's a point where you don't know how much there is to know.

S . Yes. And you take that into account in formulating your course of action.

Teresa . Also seeing, you were saying earlier about not being at fault, seeing you might be at fault.

S : It's more than that. You see that you're almost likely to commit nothing but a series of mistakes. You'll be very lucky if you actually get anything right because the situation is so complicated, so many factors are involved. You~ g~t popes and politicians laying down the law with complete confidence ~nd this sort of air of infallibility. It's really dreadful. I was reading about the present Pope. Apparently, he considers himself an expert on all sorts of matters, especially family matters, with complete conviction and and certainty~all these subjects and especially, as I said, family matters. He really does know all about ~t~~ And all that the faithful have to do, is to listen and obey. Anyway, we won't dwell on that. Let's go on to section 8.

Els : "The Buddha said: "There was one who heard that I uphold the Way and practise great benevolence and compassion. On this account, he came to scold me, but I remained silent and did not retort. When he had finished scolding me, I said: 'Sir, if you treat another with courtesy and he does not accept it, does not the courtesy rebound to you?' He replied that it does and I continued: 'Now you have just cursed me and I did not accept your curses, so the evil which you yourself did has now returned and fallen upon you. For a sound accords with the noise that produced it and the reflection accords with the form. In the end there will be no escape, so take care not to do evil."

S : So what do we find here? This is ~uch the same sort of situation as in section seven. But here the Buddha doesn't keep silent all the time, you notice. He remains silent and does not retort. He waits for the person to finish scolding him and then he says something, but he doesn't just react. He puts it very

S(ctd) : positively or in a friendly way, so that the person to whom he is speaking cannot be ashamed and realise the situation. But you notice one or two things which are a little strange, in a way. "The Buddha said: "There was one who heard that I uphold the Way" (the Dharma) "and practise great benevolence and compassion," (metta and karuna) "on this account he came to scold me." Do you think that such a thing might have happened or that such a thing does sometimes happen? On the face of it, he, this man, has heard that the Buddha upholds the Way, upholds the Dharma and actually practises 'metta' and 'karuna' and so he comes to scold him.

Sulocana : Did he think he was a false teacher?

S . It doesn't say that. It doesn't say that. I mean is it possible that he felt upset?

Sulocana : Perhaps it was his only way of communicating with the Buddha.

S . Yes, sometimes that happens.

Eve . Sometimes it's hard to tell the intention of the action. Because the Buddha might have done something which was compassionate, but someone who didn't understand what he was doing would see it as not compassionate.

S . But the text doesn't actually say that, on the face of it, does it?

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to~9t' S : It could have been that~ we are not told that. Apparently, he actually did scold the Buddha. I don't know about the translation here, but there is another version of this. 'The Buddha' I think would be more accurate as in the case of some people, the spectacle of real, genuine goodness makes them angry. Do you think so? Have you ever encountered this? Heard of it at least?

I've seen it.

Stephanie : Some people do attack things like pacifism, don't they? They say: "Oh, what's the good of that? A lot of wishy-washy nonsense."

S . Yes, yes. That's strange in a way. Pacifists are obviously harmless people. Alright, you can understand other people disagreeing with them, but they do in fact seem to get angry with them. So why should this be?

Christina : It does challenge their own view. Maybe they feel guilty in a way.

~"at S : It could be. Sometimes non-vegetarians are quite defensive or offensively defensive about vegetarians. I used to find this, for instance, when I was in India formerly, years ago. Whenever I used to go down to the Mahabodhi Society in Calcutta I was the only vegetarian around,

~~rac~~ca~~yr thrt~ere was one other. All the Sin~halese iionks and Thai monks were non-vegetarian. I used to

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S(ctd) : keep quite quiet about my vegetarianism. I used to say: "No meat for me, thank you," and just leave it at that. But I'd be sort of rounded on and attacked sometimes or challenged about my vegetarianism, as though it made people quite uneasy and uncomfortable and they felt threatened by it. I certainly didn't try to proselytize them. I certainly didn't insist on the fact that I was a vegetarian and all that, but sometimes they sort of had it in for me on that account.

Teresa . People don't like others who are different. People don't like individuals because you're supposed to be like everybody else.

S : Yes. They don't like to think that you may be better than they are, as though that is anti-egalitarian. No one's got the right to be better than anybody else, even if th~y're genuinely better. Perhaps such people don't even think that you can be genuinely better. It can only be a pretence. It can only be that you're giving yourself airs. No one can be better than anyone else, no one is in fact better than anybody else. Sometimes people do feel that, don't they? That's another sort of modern 'miccha-ditthi'. That I'm as good as you are. You're no better than me, you can't be better than me. Because nobody's better than anybody else. We're all equal. So maybe this person has heard that the Buddha upholds the Way and practises great benevolence and compassion. What business has the Buddha got doing those things? What business has he got being better than everybody else? It's presumptuous. So he went to him and scolded him. One can imagine that sort of thing happening. One finds this on quite a reduced scale within our own Movement. Sometimes new people get a bit upset that there are people called Ord~r Members who walk around wearing kesas and obviously think they are much better than everybody else. They sort of react against that. The poor innocent Order Member may not be having any such thought, but some people take it like that. "You think you're better, you think you're better than I ~hey feel they have to have a go at you. ~r~aampt&5~h~cte1 they have to try and show that you're not better than they are. Maybe they try to make you angry or something of that sort. So one can really imagine someone coming to the Buddha in this sort of way. Perhaps he was the sort of person who resents other people being superior to himself, resents even genuine superiority, cannot acknowledge it.

Sulocana . Sometimes it seems as if people resent, feel that a person may not have any feelings if they don't have these kind of feelings.

S : "The only real feelings are negative feelings" is what they're saying. They can't imagine that there can be genuine positive feelings. Sometimes you find~t,~i~f you are your~elf ~n a very positive state, it annoys other people. They don't like to see you so positive, they want to sort of pull you down to their own wretched level perhaps. It's almost a sort of insult to them that you

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S(ctd) : are so positive. But coming back to the former point, why is it that sometimes people don't like to acknowledge even the genuine superiority of others? Why are so many people nowadays reluctant to do that? 7~ ~riea~s Christin~ : ~they might have to change in some way if they acknowledge your superiorit~.~ They might have to work on them- selves.

S : Do you think it's that fact or is there more to it than that? Or less to it than that?

Punyavati : It's like people think their own feelings are inferior.

S : Yes. Well, you know that well known story about the American psychoanalyst . A man came to him saying he's got an inferiority complex and the analyst examined him and all that sort of thing and he ended up by saying. .

~~?thl~ ~ot~~ ~~~pl~~. Yo~ ~~ i'~Ferior~

(end of side one)

Sulocana : They feel that they are inferior and they can't t. .

S . Well, perhaps they are, but they don't want to feel, they don't like Lo b~. .

Vajragita : . are going to ~~~se power over the~.

S . It could be that. Perhaps they cannot conceive of superiority in any other way except in terms of power. Perhaps they cannot think in terms of, so to speak, spiritual superiority, to use that word 'superiority' which isn't a very positive word perhaps. So they cannot but feel threatened.

Trish : They're also taught to be so competitive.

S : That's true also. Yes, yes. 4f~lre taught that competition is a good thing. And far from admiring somebody who is superior to you, you should try to kick him down. I think so far as ~~~re concerned~~wadays, I think pseudo-egalitarianism is at the root,~often, of such attitudes. As though no one has got any business to be superior to anyone else. Even if you feel that you're superior, you're not supposed to admit it. ~o~~ re supposed to be apologetic about it or niake a joke of it.

Eve : What would be the root of that? Have you thought about this much? What would be the root of pseudo- egalitarianism? Because it must have a cause for it to....

S : Well, historically speaking, I suppose it goes back to the French Revolution, 'liberty, equality, fraternity' - misunderstood. I think also, to be perhaps a little more fair than that, I think that that sort of ideology arises when society ha~ come to be constituted in such a way that social differences, differences of rank, superiority and inferiority, very noticeably, even very strikingly, don't reflect any real differences of superiority and inferiority. Do you see what I mean?

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S(ctd) : In that way, people's whole faith in, so to speak, a hierarchical order in any

sense is undermined. When they can see that the people who are supposed to be better than they are, that they are supposed to be looking up to, are in fact even worse than they are, even more selfish etc. etc. So under those circumstances the notion of equality cannot but be introduced, even in exaggerated or distorted form. Because we know that at the time of the French Revolution, or during the decades preceding the French Revolution, the nobility had all sorts of privileges, were exempt from responsibilities. They were not taxed; the peasants were taxed; the nobility was exempt from taxation. The church was exempt from taxation and the majority of the nobles and even the ecclesiastics led very frivolous and empty and useless and selfish lives. So how could the rest of the people look up to them or respect them in any real sort of way? They just hated them more and more and their hatred and resentment eventually found an outward expression.

: I find it very difficult to know how to handle it in Holland when friends who are not into meditation () strong reaction in them, especially when they know you're an Order Member. "You think you are better than us and more committed."

S : I think, on the contrary, it's a very sad state of affairs when you've nobody to whom you can genuinely look up. I would say that is not, in a way, a natural state of affairs. When I say genuinely look up, I mean really genuinely look up. Not just to someone who is conventionally in a superior position to you, but someone whom you can honestly respect. Someone that you're more experienced, more emotionally positive and really better than you. It's a great relief to be in contact with someone like that instead of in contact with people who are just no better than you are. It's good to have contact with people on the same level, but you also need contact with people who are, in a word, better than you are. Otherwise, how are you going to grow? How are you really going to develop? It's also good to be in contact with people who are less developed than yourself, because that brings to you another side of yourself and you can actually help them if they rush in. So it's really a sad circumstantial state of affairs that nowadays we fall into a sort of pseudo-egalitarianism. We want to think that nobody's better than anybody else, which usually means thinking that everyone is equally bad, being sceptical and cynical about human goodness or possibilities of development or about there being more developed people in any sense.

Stephanie : I think poverty comes from sharing resources. Because there's this idea of whether you deserve things and I think if there's an attitude which is quite closely tied up with economic circumstances, that some people are better than others, that implies that some people deserve more than others, and in this century there's been a big shift towards welfare state and so on, where everybody is regarded as being equally entitled to a

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Stephanie(ctd) reasonable standard of living and education.

S : Hm. Yes.

Carla : I think too, though, to comment on your point, Vajragita, it comes as a shock because predominantly in our society there aren't many people to whom we can actually look up. I know it took me a very long time to ascertain whether or not, whether there was, when I arrived at the Friends, that there was an ideal to look up to, there were

people to look up to. And it comes not only as a shock at first, but as a relief eventually. But unfortunately, it is the case within society that most of the people whom we're expected to respect aren't worthy of our respect.

S : How disillusioning it must be when you find out your own parents, when it dawns on you as a child that your parents tell lies, that they don't really believe the things they profess to believe. This must be very disillusioning. It must destroy your faith in, let's say, authority, even in a positive sense. Then maybe you find out your teachers, maybe you find out the priests and ministers of your religion, yes? Well, you're not going to find it very easy therea~ter, generally, to look up to anybody else that 4 meet: You'll be very sceptical, very wary and perhaps quite rightly so. You'll want to test them, perhaps, to be quite sure because you've already been let down so many times.

Eve : Yes, that relates back to the point about being pretentious or trying not to be pretentious, because then if people are looking up to you and you are just being yourself and not being pretentious, then you aren't going to disappoint people because you're not trying to be anything you're not. Because I think a lot of the trouble with people getting disillusioned with authority, is because people like priests set themselves up as that and fall short of it.

S : But of course there's another whole side of the picture, something very different, that a lot of people want to look up to others or to somebody else in a very, what shall I say, distorted kind of way. They want a leader, they want a saviour, to actually place their faith in somebody.

Teresa : Somebody else to take the responsibility.

S : Somebody else to take the responsibility. This is something really quite different. This is not a genuine looking up to someone who really is more developed or more experienced or even better than you are. I mean, this is just looking for some authority figure who can take on all the responsibility which you ought to be accepting and exercising yourself. So one might say that the two things are connected to some extent. That if you don't have around anybody to whom you can just look up to some extent, well, in your despair you may just sort of give up all thought of trying yourself, of thinking in terms of personal development, res~ibility; and you just start looking for some wh~th~itical economic, religious - pseudo-

Saviour~% political,

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S(ctd) : religious, that is. This is something that I encountered in India to some extent. A lot of people want you just to lead them. In India people think in terms of leaders and followers, and I spoke about this in several lectures and I said that in the FWBQ we don't think in terms of leaders and followers, we think~~~~~Speople working together as a team. In the team, yes, some are more experienced than others but they're not leaders in the sense that people in India usually think of leaders. Anyway: "There was one who heard that I uphold the Way and practise great benevolence and compassion. On this account he came to

scold me, but I remained silent and did not retort." It is very difficult to remain silent sometimes and not to retort. "When he had finished scolding me," the Buddha let him finish, "I said: 'Sir, ~tt~he was very polite, I don't know how literal this translation is, "if you treat another with courtesy and he does not accept it, does not the courtesy rebound to you?" There is an alternative translation which I think makes the sense clearer. Supposing, the Buddha said, someone gives you a present, a gift. Supposing you're not willing to accept it, to whom does it belong? To whom does it return? It returns, it belongs, to the person who wanted to give it. So, in the same way, "Now you have just cursed me," you have just made me a present of these curses. I don't accept your present, I don't accept your curses, so to whom do they belong? They belong to you, they return to you. That translation makes the sense clearer, doesn't it? "For a sound accords with the noise that produced it, " that is, the echo is in accordance with the original sound' "and the reflection accords with the form. In the end there will be no escape," that is to say, no escape from the results of karma, "so take care not to do evil." So the Buddha gives him a gentle sort of warning. He doesn't simply remain silent, though he doesn't retort. He gives the person time to finish, even abusing or scolding him, but then he does, very politely, very gently but firmly, make his point. He makes the other person realise what exactly is happening, what he is doing and the very likely, in fact inevitable, consequences to himself. So you aren't obliged simply to suffer passively. You may, as it were, take the offensive in a positive manner if you feel that you can do so skilfully and wisely,~to good effect. We'll do one more section. Alright, let's go on to section nine.

Elsie : "The Buddha said: "An evil man who seeks to injure is like one who spits at heaven; the spittle, far from reaching heaven, descends upon the spitter. Or he causes a wind to raise dust, hut, instead of going elsewhere, the dust descends upon himself. Virtue cannot be destroyed, while evil inevitably destroys i t s e l f."

S : Do you think this is true, that virtue cannot be destroyed? What does one mean by destroying virtue? What is virtue?

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Essential being.

Eve : Could that be an act coming from a positive mind, a skilful mind?

S Yes, an act of body, speech or mind or any two or all three. For~~~Yn~s~ta%0cfl~~,C~s~pt~~s~lyC~u speak the truth, you don't tel~~ies, well, can anybody destroy that particular quality? Can anybody make you tell a lie?

No.

Teresa . They could use force to try to make you say something you didn't actually believe.

S : But if you didn't actually believe it, even though you

spoke the words under duress, would you actually be not speaking the truth? Probably not.

Teresa : You mean you wouldn't be speaking the truth?

S : Probably you wouldn't be speaking an untruth, because it would be merely that you were forced to say those words but you weren't really saying them with your heart. You were simply repeating the words that were required under duress. So, can virtue be destroyed? To the extent that virtue depends upon your individual volition, your individual choice, it can't. To the extent that your will cannot be affected, virtue cannot be destroyed. Someone may make you go through the motions of negating what you really believe, but that is a different case.

Teresa . So the external manifestation can be destroyed, but not the internal?

S : Yes, yes. Well, evil inevitably destroys itself; virtue cannot be destroyed, even from outside. But evil, on the other hand, can not only be destroyed from the outside, it destroys itself. As per illustration. It's a simple illustration. I don't know how literally you can take it. If you spit against the wind, well, as Shakespeare says, the wind blows it back in~to your own face. But you can actualal1~spit at another person, can't you? The wind doesn't t~~ow, it back. You can do harm to other people but you can't destroy their virtue. I think you've got to be careful not to think that because you can't destroy somebody else's virtue, you can~t do them any harm. And in fact you may, in a sense, destroy their virtue by provoking a negative reaction on their part. They are still responsible for that, but you ~~~v~ helped to bring it about. Sometimes you may be provoking them beyond normal human endurance. But to the extent that you are in control of yourself, to the extent that your actions and reactions are really individual actions and reactions, you~ virtue can't be destroyed. Of course, people are very weak. They're not in complete control of themselves. Maybe here there's another little bit of a 'miccha-ditthi'. Someone says: "He made me angry." That also is shelving responsibility. Well, it's not strictly true that someone else made you angry, with the assumption, or the implication, that you're not responsible for your state of anger.

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S(ctd) : On the other hand it is true that people are not very strong in their emotional positivity and it isn't very difficult, practically speaking, to, I won't say make them angry, but to provoke perhaps the anger that is already latent there. So you have also the resp*ibility perhaps to help people not to give way to anger but rather help them to be emotionally positive and constructive.

Trish : Bhante, do you think it is likely that anyone has no latent anger? Well, can you get to a situation where there's no latent anger?

S : According to the Buddhist tradition, Arahants and those who are Enlightened have no anger or at least have no hatred. Perhaps one has to make a distinction between anger and hatred. What is anger as distinct from hatred, would you say?

Noel : You can use anger skilfully.

S : Anger is a sort of energy that sort of breaks through obstacles, whereas hatred is something more than that, hatred is a desire, a strong, even violent desire, actually to do harm to other people. I mean, if you get angry with someone you just want him out of your way, but if you hate him you want to annihilate him. You don't want him to be around at all, even if he isn't in your way. That seems to me to be the difference.

Noel : That also damages yourself, doesn't it, ~t ~vil -

S : Yes, because the state of hatred is a very painful and unpleasant one for the person experiencing it.

Stephanie : I'm not sure how it is that evil inevitably destroys itself. I can see in concrete examples how it can do it, but I haven't got an idea of the principle.

S : Hm. . . what does one mean by destruction anyway? What does one mean by evil destroying itself? Well, literally, of course it doesn't destroy itself, does it? Hatred doesn't destroy hatred. It's more likely that evil destroys the person who entertains the evil. Because, after all, evil doesn't exist in the abstract, apart from people. So evil destroys the person who gives way to evil. In other words, the person who gives way to evil, becomes more evil. The person who behaves unskillfully becomes more unskillful, in other words, deteriorates further.

Stephanie : That doesn't make the person go away, they become more evil or more hateful.

S : It doesn't make them go away, no. They themselves, from the social point of view, may continue very much to be around, unfortunately.

Teresa : Does it destroy our positive states, the negative ones?

S : Well, yes. It's not even so much that evil destroys your positive states. Evil is the absence or abeyance of those positive states. One might even say that evil people are very far from destroying themselves, in a social sense. Very often they're very much around, very much, very

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S(ctd) : obvious. They make themselves false. Evil sometimes has a certain energy. The bad people seem to have more energy than the good ones, which is rather odd. Yeats said, what are those famous lines? "The best lack all conviction, while the worst Are full of passionate intensity."

Sulocana : He was biased.

S : Was he? You mean he favoured evil, favoured the bad? Or he liked passionate intensity?

Sulocana : He seemed to have a strong view of who was good and who was bad.

S : But you know what he means. (So often?) good people are very often just 'goody-goody'. It's the bad people sometimes who very often have the life and the energy and the passion and the intensity, which is rather a pity because it's the good people who should have those things.

Sulocana . Some people just think they're bad.

S . That's also true. Or they think the other people are good ~h~h they're merely weak and a bit cold-blooded. (C~r~'stiaril.) Punyavati : Perhaps it's more a question of whether good is quite passive or evil is quite passionate.

S : Well, Blake tried to reverse things, didn't he? Blake would have seen the intense, passionate person as the good person and the weak person as the bad person. Really, how can you be good and lack conviction? It is said that the best lack all conviction. How can you be good, how can you be the best and lack all conviction? It's really ridiculous. The good are not anaemic.

It's according to the morals of the time.

Noel . The Victorians saw sick people as quite evil, didn't they? If you were very sickly, most likely you'd done some evil thing somewhere.

S : Oh, I thought it was the other way round. If you were sickly and pale and pallid and suffering from consumption, laying back on a pillow with big beautiful ah~ blue eye~0open ~angels hovering around . Sickness was very near~ death in a way. But if you ~&rt robust and healthy with red cheeks ~~, gross and vulgar, chances are you were rather wicked, especially if you were a woman.

Trish . Sometimes that view still holds of gentle, timid women being more acceptable.

S : Morally more acceptable?

Vajragita : There is quite impressive energy in anger.

S : Hm, yes. In a way, it's a pity that quite a few people can't manage, apparently, to summon up real energy unless they get angry. There is a lot of energy because it's breaking through obstacles and if you can break through the obstacles

without doiing any actual harm to other people, one cannot

S(ctd) : say that the anger is unskilful. Perhaps it isn't completely skilful, but on the other hand it certainly isn't unskilful. There is a sort of st~~ which is short of anger,~in which you do feel a lot of powerful energy that you could, if you wanted ~o, use for destructive purposes, but which you don't~whi ch you have no inclination to use in that sort of way. But that energy is there. Hm? I don't know what one would call it. There's almost not a real word for it. . jus~ Maybe you could call it~passion. Not obviously, in the sextial sense, biit pass~ on ~ n the general emotional sense. There's 'passionate intensity'. Yeats regarded that sort of thing as an attribute of the worst, but one could regard it as an attribute of the best. You could reverse, perhaps, what Yeats says. He says: "The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity." It should be: "The worst lack all conviction, while the best are full of passionate intensity." Hm? It's a skilful passionate intensity. But to come back to what I was sayin4before. Evil people, or bad people, genuinely bad, that is to say in the seuse of being unskilful and having lots of energy, they can make a real nuisance of Lhemselves. Sometimes you have to spend a lot of your energy, or waste a lot of your energy, just counteracting all the mischief that t~~yt re creating and that can make one quite annoyed.

Teresa : It~s very difficult to know what to do in that situation, because in a sense you feel, well, in a way, it's a lost opportunity because those people have so much energy. If you could redirect it...

S : And even objectively, they may be doing a lot of dama~;~~~~ You may feel just like shooting them, like some mad dog < t~~k 'that's the quickest and easiest way out.' Just put them out of the way, out of their misery! Your misery! Y6s£ i~3h~ rec~ tempted like that sometimes. Sometimes people can be real nuisance~and do a lot of m\ ~ief and cause a lot of damage () their own 'tal states. They can interfere with the good work you are doing and it can be a great temptation for you to put them quietly out of the way with as little f-uss and bother as possible.

Christina : It might not be a good action on your part if you were to do that.

S : Buddhism would say that would certainly not be a good action 011 your part, but sometimes people don't see things in that way. But one might be tempted1 even if one did know it wasn't very ~'&d~~tic. It can be very annoying, to say the least, to have to spend a lot of your time and your energy just counteracting the mischievi~~S e~r~of other people trying to interf~re with what you are doing for no apparent reason other than just love of mischief. There are such people, unfortunately, around.

Teresa : That can have further consequences and people can actually be harmed.

Eve : That even happens within oneself as well. It seems to me that quite a lot of the time I'm in conflict between negative emotion and positive emotion. It's a similar sort of (play?)

own problems. How nice it would be if you could put all your energy to really creative things.

Eve : I feel like getting a gun out and shooting () S .
And shooting half of yourself! Make sure you shoot the right one! S
. Anyway, anything more, apart from all this?

Ann : Just one thing. If you begin to cultivate skilful emotions or unskilful emotions, do they tend to increase themselves, like a cumulative effect?

S : I think they do. I have talked before about habit. Habit is quite important because you can get into good habits, you can get into bad habits. You can get into skilful habits, you can get into unskilful habits. And if you've got certain habits, especially skilful habits, they can make the whole business of living more convenient.

As when, for instance, you get into the habit of meditating every day at the same time. The fact that you're doing it every day at the same time makes it easier for you to do it at all. So if one isn't sure of one's capacity to perform certain skilful actions, well, it's better that you build up a habit of performing them by doing them at the particular time or on a certain occasion or in a certain way or in connection with certain things.

Teresa : Would that be how you describe discipline?

S : In a way, yes. A discipline is a positive habit that you've built up as a sort of safeguard against unskilful behaviour.

Alright, let's leave it there until tomorrow when we'll be getting on to a rather different subject.

(end of tape)

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S : Would someone like to read Section 10?

Sulocana : "The Buddha said: "Listen avidly to and cherish the

Way. The Way will certainly be hard to reach.
humbly. The Way is mighty indeed."

Maintain your desire to accept it

S : Hm. So, "The Buddha said: 'Listen avidly to and cherish the Way.'~~ What does this suggest? What does it suggest, this fact that the Buddha feels it necessary to advise people to listen avidly to and cherish the Way, the Dharma? What does that suggest?

Eve . The importance of receptivity.

S . Yes.

Sulocana . () to desire to listen to the Way.

S : It suggests though, I think, that people don't always value the Way or the Dharma sufficiently. The Buddha says: "Listen avidly to and cherish the Way." Don't take it for granted. Don't treat it lightly. Listen to it avidly, that is to say, eagerly, almost, one might say, greedily. Really listen to it and cherish it and really look after it, really value it, really care for it, cultivate it, protect it. I mean, nowadays the Dharma is available in books and maybe that leads us to undervalue it, perhaps. I mean, in former times it wasn't like that. In the Buddha's day you couldn't buy a book on the Buddha's teaching. In fact, for hundreds of years, books on the Buddha's teaching were not available at all. You had to find someone who would repeat it to you, who would repeat to you what he knew of the Dharma by heart. Books were very rare, and even in this country, not so very long ago, it wasn't so easy to get hold of books on Buddhism or translations of Buddhist texts. I can remember, and this isn't very long ago, forty years ago, trying to put together a little collection of books on Buddhism and translations of Buddhist texts. There weren't many of them around in those days. Now there are hundreds and hundreds. So we've become a bit blasé about it perhaps. It's all so easily available, it's so accessible. We've got all sorts of formerly very rare works, even esoteric works, just available in paperback, so you can go and buy them for £1 or so. So perhaps this fact makes us undervalue them a bit, if we're not careful. Formerly you had to spend days on your knees outside the monastery gate in the snow. Well, now you can just turn over a book of Koans and Zen stories and so on. ~t~s all become so easy. Or at least it's not so easy if you don't take the Dharma really

seriously.

Stephanie : In one sense it's harder though, isn't it? Because, after all, a book of Moans is probably a lot less use to you than a single Moan given to you by a teacher.

S : Oh, yes. In a way, you think that you know it. I mean, an American scholar put out a volume containing a very large number of Moans, translated from the Japanese - and

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S(ctd) : the answers. In the Buddha's day, and for centuries afterwards, you just received, from the people with whom you were personally in touch, just whatever teaching you needed for your immediate needs. You didn't have the opportunity of just browsing through Buddhist literature. And here you may notice the Buddha says: "Listen avidly to and

cherish the Way." Perhaps the Buddha is speaking at a time when there were still no books. "Cherish the Way." How does one cherish the Way? How does one cherish the Dharma?

Punyavati : By practising it. S . By practising it. Yes.
Teresa . Also we don't devalue it.

S . Hm. Apart from practising it, how could you cherish the Dharma?

Marlene . Create conditions where it can flourish.

S : Yes. Even look after the books which contain the Dharma, look after them carefully. Make sure that they're properly kept, see that they're kept in print. I'm a bit surprised sometimes at the offhand way in which people treat books, not only Dharma books, but books in general. They don't care for them, they don't cherish them, they don't treat them properly, they let them become dog-eared, just throwing them around. Then the Buddha says: "The Way" (the Dharma) "will certainly be hard to reach." Not only should you not take it lightly, you should realise that the Dharma is not easy to reach, not easy to realise, not easy to experience. It requires a lot of effort, it requires concentration, mindfulness, hard work. And then he says: "Maintain your desire to accept it humbly." < This suggests that you may have a desire to accept the Dharma humbly to begin with, but you may not be able to maintain that, you may not be able to keep up that attitude. Familiarity with the Dharma may breed, not contempt, perhaps, but may breed a tendency to treat it rather lightly, to undervalue it, to think that you know it, that you've grasped it, that you've mastered it.

Sc

: Perhaps another effect of having it readily available is that it's almost too much. It's very distracting, perhaps concentrating on one patch () flitting ()

S : Yes. Flit from one patch to another.

Elsie : I think it also suggests to keep in touch with the vision as well. Because one could sort of say, get into the Dharma and learn much about it and sort of feel high, that 'I know so much!' rather than just lose touch with the vision.

S : Yes, you must keep in touch with, you must remember what the Dharma is for, the purpose of the Dharma. More than once I've had the experience of encouraging someone, from a Dharma point of view to take up, say, the study of Pali or Sanskrit. But what happens? They get so

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S(ctd) : immersed in the Pali or Sanskrit that they forget all about the Dharma. They no longer see the wood for the trees. But the Buddha concludes by saying: "The Way is mighty indeed." What does this suggest? Why does the Buddha say this?

Stephanie : He's saying it's worth the effort.

S : It's worth the effort. Also the fact that the Way is mighty is contrasted perhaps with your desire to accept it humbly, yes? It is something vast, sublime, in a sense overpowering. The only appropriate attitude on your part is a humble attitude. Not thinking that you really know the Dharma or that you really understand it at all or have practised it very much. The Dharma far transcends your present understanding. You can't even begin to approach it. The Dharma is an ocean and maybe you've tasted just a few drops from the ocean. Nothing more than that. It's easy to pride yourself on a very little knowledge of the Dharma thinking that you really do know a great deal. So therefore the Buddha says: "Listen avidly to and cherish the Way. The Way will certainly be hard to reach. Maintain your desire to accept it humbly. The Way is mighty indeed." So there's really quite a lot of food for thought there. Maybe not much further discussion, but certainly a lot that requires understanding quite deeply. Alright, let's go onto section eleven. Someone like to read that?

Marje : "The Buddha said: "Observe those who bestow (knowledge of) the Way, for to help them is a great joy and many blessings can thus be obtained." A Sramana asked: "Is there any limit to such blessings?" The Buddha replied: "They are like the fire of a torch from which hundreds and thousands of people light their own torches. Thus the darkness is swallowed up. Such is the nature of those blessings."

S : Hm. One knows the nature of fire, because you can light one fire from many fires. You can light one lamp from another, you can light many lamps from one lamp. You get this comparison in the 'Vimalakirti Nirdeśa', don't we? Of it being possible to light so many lights, so many lamps, from one. The lamps go on expanding and multiplying. So it's just the same, the Buddha is saying, with the blessings derived from bestowing knowledge of the Way, or helping those who bestow knowledge of the Way. Every time knowledge of the Way issues, every time you help someone who bestows knowledge of the Way, it's like lighting a torch, lighting a new torch from a torch that already exists. In this way somebody teaching somebody else what he has learned, he teaching somebody else, in this way, torch after torch is lit, lamp after lamp is lit and in this way the light spreads. You don't lose here anything by giving. When you impart knowledge, unlike giving money, you don't lose knowledge that you yourself have. You can give knowledge without giving knowledge away. When

S(ctd) : you give money, you give the money away. You no longer have it. There may of course be a blessing resting with you because you've given away the money, but the money doesn't stay with you. But in the case of knowledge, when you give knowledge, knowledge continues to stay with you, even though you've given it. It multiplies like fire. So there's no limit to Siles sings. This is quite a thought.

Eve : Would blessings be like ~\&r%~~, ,.LC , positivity?

S : It could be, yes. I don't think mundane blessings is meant, but some kind of spiritual ~race, you might say. Some kind of spiritual blessing. If we go back to the time of the Buddha, originally there was only the Buddha. But then the Buddha gained disciples. He passed on, so to speak, whatever he'd gained, what- ever he'd understood, whatever he'd realised, to them, without in any way diminishing his own realisation. They passed it on to other people with whom they were in contact. They passed it on to others still. Tn this way the circle widened, it included more and more people. More and more torches were lit, more and more lamps were lit. So this is how we have to proceed. It also suggests it's by way of individual contact, individual teaching. I mean, a number of torches can be kindled from one torch, but they have to be kindled one by one.

Marlene . Does that mean that having lots of books available about Buddhism isn't necessarily a good thing?

S : Well, it depends on the use that one makes of the books. If one simply skims through them, not going into them very deeply, well, their usefulness is limited. I also think more and more that it's best, if one possibly can, to go through a text in the context of a study group. You get much more out of it then. Because if you read, you sometimes read too quickly. You think you've under- stood, but you haven't understood. You don't give yourself a chance to linger over the text, to turn it round or to turn it over in your mind, to think about it. This one should also do. In the study group there is more of that sort of opportunity. Somebody else may see in the text something that you haven't been able to see. It isn't necessarily that they're more intelligent than you, they r'ay just see things from another point of view. In that way, it throws fresh light on what you're studying. ThereVs one quite important little point sort of implied here. You notice the Buddha says: "Observe those who bestow (knowledge of) the Way, for to help them is a i:reat joy and many blessings can thus be obtained." It's not just a question of you, as I say, learning about the Way and then in your turn bestowing knowledge of the Way. Even to help those who are bestowing knowledge of the Way is a great joy without even bestowing that knowled~e in turn yourself. Hm? This brings us, for instance, to the question or the subject of supporting. Do you know what I'm talking about? This is within the contect of a centre, within the context of a class. Somebody else may be leading the class, somebody else may be doing the bestowing of the knowledge, so to speak, but just by helping them you

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S(ctd) : can experience great joy and many blessings can be obtained. Nowadays, in our rather individualistic, competitive sort of society, people don't like just to support. They think of it as taking a back seat, playing second fiddle, just helping. They want to be out front. They want to be taking the leading nart. That's really a very wrong sort of attitude.

Eve : You could say it's another 'miccha-ditthi'

S : You could say that's another 'miccha-ditthi', yes. 'To help those who are bestowing knowledge of the Way is a great joy and many blessings can thus be obtained'. If you're supporting someone who is taking or who is leading a class, well, that can be an extremely

positive thing to do. Supporting is, in itself, a definite role. If you are leading a class of any kind, whether it's a meditation class, study group; you can be greatly helped by somebody who is with you, supporting you and there just to support you and who is supporting in a very positive way. Just making things easy for you. So the person who is supporting the one who is leading the class, leading the study group, can make a very positive contribution. We shouldn't always think in terms of ourselves being the leader.

Eve : I think it gets difficult when the role of support is fixed, like, if you always do that and people expect that of you. I think that's when you can get resentful if you feel that you (are meant?) to be fulfilling the role of 'support' when it isn't actually coming up as a spontaneous role to actually support that person.

S Not quite...

Eve : Well, I can see it from the point of view of kind of from my own experience. In West London. I do take great pleasure in supporting. In the last course we did but I could also see that, in my past experience, like in New Zealand, where it was as if I no longer actually wanted to support- but, besides that, it's more like feeling that you're, that something's expected of you, that the role is actually... that you're sitting there and you've got your hat on, you're supporting it and it's not actually coming from your heart but it's something that you can feel obliged to do or that you have to do it or it's your place to support. If you don't actually feel like it, you feel perhaps angry with it.

S : In a way, yes, but in a way, no. Because, for instance, someone asks you perhaps, someone says: "Well, look, I'm leading such and such a group. Would you like to support me?" and then you say: "Yes." Well, having agreed, you should put yourself into it fully. If you feel you don't want to support that particular person for any reason, just say 'no'. Do you see what I mean?

Eve : So that it's conscious, rather than I suppose...

S : But from what you say, it suggests that a time can come when you get sort of tired of supporting. Is it because you think, well, it's about time you got your chance to lead?

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Eve . It could be that or it could also be not actually wanting to support as being part of what you do in the Centre situation.

Carla Or it could be feeling taken for granted, that whoever was taking the class wasn't actually appreciating the energy you were putting into it, which I have not personally ever experienced because I very much enjoy supporting classes.

S : But then it would seem if that was ever the case, it would seem there was sort of a problem of communication. Because the two people who are respectively leading and supporting the leading of a class should get together, certainly get together before the class. There should be understanding

between them. It isn't as if to be~good say. well, he comes from East London and you come from West London and you just happen to meet in the class and he or she is leading and you are supporting and that's that. No, it really shouldn't be like that. I think probably it isn't anyway. But why does one get fed up after a while with supporting?

Ann . I think it's when it stops becoming active. I think the text suggests it should be active. Where it says....

S : It shouldn't be you sitting there like a lump by the side of the person. Supporting is a very active thing. Therefore you must want to do it and your heart must be in it. You can't do it just mechanically. It can't be just a sort of role. So if you're unable to support, well, you should stop, as it were, appearing to support, because that can be a real drag on the leader of the group or the class, feeling that he's having to carry along with him this so-called 'support'. He's not getting support. That can be very demoralising sometimes, undermining. You are better off on your own, without that so-called 'support'.

Ann . I think it also suggests that if you're actually looking for things that need to be done, rather than always waiting or always doing things you think are always done in that situation.

S : Right, indeed, yes. There are certain obvious things which are suggested the person supporting should look after. Check the arrangements for the room, the arrangements for the class, whether everything is there, ready for the tea or coffee afterwards etc. so that whoever is leading doesn't have to think about those things. Then within the class itself, sometimes putting in a tactful word from time to time, just to help things along. But you must all the time ~nst want to do that and feel that supporting is really a positive thing. You shouldn't think of it in terms of playing second fiddle or taking a back seat or anything of that sort.

Noel : I think sometimes just doin~ things regularly, I find that difficult ;ust to keep things fresh....

S : Yes, but on the other hand it's probably a mistake to think in terms of doing it again. 'I've done this

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S(ctd) : htundreds of times before.' I remember, I was down in London, as you probably know. Originally, I took all the classes there for a while, year after year. I took so many beginners' classes b~~ think I didn't ever really have ,~

the feeling, 'I've done all this before,' because every time I had a group of beginners I just thought: "Here are these people and I'm going to talk about the Mindfulness of Breathing or the Metta," and I sort of started afresh each time. So I think this is what one must do. I think what one musn't do is to try and remember what you did before and repeat that. Forget what

you did before, forget what you said about the Mindfulness or the Metta Bhavana. Just speak here and now from your experience to those people, who will probably give you quite fresh, quite different responses. Maybe ask different questions~ questions you haven't had before. So I think, in the same way, when you're supporting, don't think, 'well, here we go, the same old situation, doing the same old thing etc.' No, just a completely fresh approach, even though, in a sense, you ~e done it before, but in a sense, you haven't. Because the situation is slightly, even though 5ubtl~&~~~~S~~ It's not really exactly the same situation. You're not even the same person.

Punyavati : Otherwise the support becomes passive.

S : Right. Then sooner or later you become a drag on the proceedings.

Punyavati : I often think being supportive in a class or... it may seem like being in the background, but it's like creating the right conditions....

S : Ah, right.

Punyavati : ... for the leader to function in, and all the time watching and creating a balance and harmony. Althou~h the leader may be there actually talking and seems to be in control of things, but it is really the person whose support is actually generating a lot of energy, and every time you see there is something missing or lacking, you try and create a balance.

S Right. Carla . It's a bit like...

Noel . It becomes a team. It blurs the distinction between leaders and support, it's actually something you create each time...

S : It's simply that one person is more obviously the centre of attention.

Carla : It's a bit like creative li5tening,~where you can actually help a teacher to become much better, but if you~re sitting there looking around the room and yawning, the teacher doesn't know what to do. But if you sit there and look attentively and you're listening and you're interested, a teacher starts to feel fired up and a teacher actually... the quality of the students can really affect teachers.

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S : That's true. It's quite, in a way, a disconcerting exnerience to be giving a lecture and right;~~~ front of you, right in the middle, is someone who is~qu~te obviously not interested and wishing it was all over and done with. Y~~ do~-n't feel inspired to give of best on such occasions, do you? And if there~5 even just one person doing that, it can be disconcerting. It strikes a false note, it introduces quite a jarring element. This is one of the, in a way, quite stimulating things about visiting India. About going along, giving lectures there. People really do want to hear you there. They

come from miles sometimes, even on foot and in bullock carts, just to attend the lecture~~'5~~ey really do want to hear you, so that it does make a difference. It does create a certain kind of atmosphere, a lot of people are really eager to hear what you have to say, really looking forward to it, really happy to hear. And showing their appreciation also. Dozens and dozens of flower garlands, at least! Big smiles and bursts of applause from time to time. It really helps things along!

Trish : What if we started doing all ~hat?

S : Well, I suppose it's a little difficult in England! ~~~ dtfFi~L£It to do things on a small scale. Do you see what I mean? Very often people are appreciative, but, well, the inhibited English have their own way of doing things. And also you do require ~uite a lot of people to generate enthusiasm and interest in that sort of way. I'm referring to meetings where there are at least two or three thousand people, maybe four or five thousand, maybe up to nine or ten thousand sometimes. It does create a very different sort of atmosphere.

Teresa . I was thinking about the word 'bestow', to bestow knowledge. Because also in that situation...

rerh~~ S : Well this being a translation of a translation,~we can't take these English words too literally. But clearly one can't really 'bestow' knowledge on anyone, really give knowledge. One can impart or communicate, perhaps share. Knowledge isn't a thing that you just hand over to other people. So we musn' t take the word 'bestow' too literally. But lust to come back for a minute to this auestion of supporting'. Don't you think that in our culture, in our society, in the West, supportiveness is very greatly undervalued? So why do you think this is? It's as though everyone wants to be out front, everyone wants to take the leading part, play the leading role, be the leading man or the leading lady.

Liz : It's like a lack of friendliness, really.

S : Lack of friendliness, yes.

Punvavati : I think society is based very much upon (

S : Well, compet~ tiveness, individualism. . Ann :
Selfishness. S : Well, really, I hope I'm not treading on dangerous

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S(ctd) : ground, one really notices this in India, the supportive- ness of the wife. The wife ~upports the husband, whereas only too often in the West the wife seems to be trying to undermine k~r husband or to cut the ground from under his feet with a few well-chosen

words in front of visitors. you know the sort of th~ng I mean?

Sulocana . And the other way around.

S And the other way around, yes. But in India you just don't get that. It just doesn't occur. Though in India I must say they think of the wife as the supportive one and the husband as the one who, as it were, is the group leader or the class leader, but you do get that sort of thing very much more, I think supportiveness generally, probably, is much more valued in India than it is in this country.

Trish : Perhaps because it's been seen as a passive rather than an active function. I know that my initial reaction to the word 'receptivity' was passive rather than active.

Stephanie : Is it also to do with mobility perhaps? Because in some cultures people have certain places, like for example, women have a certain place in the home and so do men. And there's the caste system where people know their stratuwi in society; whereas in the West, people tend to regard themselves as being mobile. Anybody can make it, and the way that you become mobile is by competing with people and trying to get into a d{fferent position. There's quite an emphasis on status and hierarchy.

S . Well, there is that emphasis on status and hierarchy in India too, in some ways even more strongly. But certa~nly in, say, domestic life and in ordinary social life, I mean on each particular level, let us say, each individual level, supportiveness is really very highly valued.
t~~~e. Stephanie : But there isn't the mobility, is there?

S : There certainly isn't the mobility, no. Though there is much more than there used to be, in~as~much as people from villages are migrating to the big towns, to the cities. There's been a big sort of shift of population, but the majority of people are still relatively tied down, one might say. I mean, I notice this because whenever I go to India, I go to see old friends and for the most part they're living exactly where I left them twenty or twenty-five years ago, the same house, exactly the same. They haven't moved at all in most cases, in very few cases, c~rtainlj . Whereas if I was to go and ~r~~ look up people in this country that I kne~ even ten years ago, it's more than likely that they wouldn't be liv~ng in the same place, in the same house4

Stephanie : But I meant~ when I said mobility, I meant in the sense of moving, changing your role really, rather than physically moving, ~~~&l~In~ yowr O~cUpatLC~.

S : Well, change of role in India is very difficult, mainly on account of the caste system perhaps. ~her~' 5 a certain amount of upward mobility in government ~er~ic~~

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S(ctd) : but apart from that, really very little, very little social mobility, hardly any. You can change your class in this country - just about - but you can't change your caste in India. That just doesn't happen except perhaps over a period of hundreds of years.

Teresa : Is it something then that's more in the traditional society? The value of supportiveness. Whereas since, ~~, feudalism got replaced...

S : It's also a question, maybe of devotion. Devotion is very much stressed~ in a religious or spiritual sense. Devotion, reverence, showing of respect, these things are given importance.

Punyavati : And serving.

S : And serving, yes. People don't feel that it's disgraceful to serve. They serve you very willingly and happily usually.

Christine : I think you have to feel quite secure in your position in order to be generous in that way or to give your support. Enough to feel it is not going to undermine you, not to feel the need to be on top.

S : If you feel the need to be on top, then presumably you are quite an insecure person. I mean, to come back to this question of supporting somebody leading a class, I mean, you have to feel quite secure and happy in yourself to be able to do that. If you want to compete with that person it means that you're not really sure of yourself.

Noel : Also it seems to suggest being in touch with a wider vision. If you're just thinking of leading rather than being supportive, it can be a very narrow vision of what's actually going on. Why you're even there.

S : Right. Of course one does assume that the person who is leading is, so to speak, more qualified, at least within that situation, to lead, and the person supporting is perhaps more qualified to support. Though sometimes you may find people exchanging roles, so to speak. They may be more or less on the same level of experience and sometimes one leads and sometimes the other supports. It's just a matter of mutual arrangement and mutual agreement. It maybe, in a sense, doesn't matter, so long as it's clear who is going to be responsible for leading the class and who is going to be supporting that person.

Eve : I just thought of something. It seems to me that quite a lot of this connects with the power mode and the love mode. Because in the whole sort of power mode the way of functioning is that number one has to be on top, and ~~~t there is only place for ~%Thbe~~n top. Whereas what's suggested here in this case, is more like co-operation, which comes more from the love mode.

S : yes, because if you're thinking in terms of competition, well, clearly the power mode is involved. So if you're thinking you should not be supporting, you

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Skctd) : should be the one who is leading, why is this other person leading? Well, clearly the power mode has come into operation, the love mode is not present. But if you're functioning in a supportive fashion, then you're functioning in accordance with the love mode, and of course, in the context of a class, of a group, say a meditation class or a Dharma

study group, whoever is leading, is leading of course, or is operating also according to the love mode, not the power mode. So that person accepts the other person's supportiveness in that sort of spirit, not that, well, ~m top dog and you~ re just supporting me. That is not the attitude at all, or shouldn't be the attitude at all.

tI'~~) Marlene : In the context of marriage,⁴ it would mean that what you were saying about Western wives not being supportive, that Western marriages were based on the power mode.

S : Well, I would say from my own observation that that is very often the case, unfortunately. That a struggle goes on for power and this cannot conduce to the happiness of those concerned. A struggle for power, a serious struggle for power, cannot conduce to the happiness of those concerned, whether it's within marriage or in any other sort of relationship.

Teresa ~t~ 5 a lack of awareness, isn't it, on our behalf as to what we feel when we go into something? If we take some- thing on and then we feel resentful because we find it's different to how we thought of it, we're not really aware of it. S : For instance, supposing, as is actually the case, you're the - I don't know what you are called - manageress of the 'Cherry Orchard' or whatever. So there are people working, some people would say 'under' you, but that is not the attitude with which you fulfil your particular function. The boss of this show, and they're working under me," no. But some people maybe coming in from outside the Movement or from the fringes of the Movement, may see it like that, or may feel it like that quite wrongly. You see what I mean? Because they think in terms of the power mode, even though you may be fully operating in accordance with the love mode and think of yourself as just cherishing and nurturing that whole situation, not think of yourself, or feel yourself as the 'boss' at all, but they may feel that. That makes things difficult.

Punyav~~i : To be able to lead well, you should be able to know how to support well.

S : well, yes. Ideally, so to speak, you - to use the wrong sort of language - you've come up through the ranks, hm? You have supported, you know what it means to support, you haven't always been, say, leading. So you fully understand what it means to support, so you can accept the support in the right sort of way. You know what that other person is doing, you know how they're helping you, because you've done all that yourself and you accept it sort of gratefully and in a positive spirit and without feeling that you are the boss or anything like that.

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Vajragita : It also means when you go somewhere and somebody's leading, giving talks etc. not only to show appreciation to the one who is leading, but also to show it to the one who is supporting.

S Right. This is again something I noticed on tour in India. There were about ten or twelve of us going around much of the time, especially in Central Mahara*ra, and when it came to the end of the meeting, well, the local people showed their appreciation...

S(ctd) : went round with us, in a sense almost to keep us company, and hadn't actually done anything, they were just sort of sitting there, but they'd come with us; they also got a garland and a few words of appreciation were expressed that they'd come along. So everybody was given appreciation because it was quite obvious that it was a sort of co-operative effort, even though I happened to be taking the leading part, actually giving the lecture, or at least giving the main lecture, because sometimes others spoke as well; and yes, we did support one another. This, by the way, was a bit of a novelty for people there, because things aren't always done in that sort of way. There are intense power struggles, even in religious movements. 9~op~t could see that in our case that ~ust didn't happen, it wasn't on,~n~%~\~aCsflnt~t there at all. Sometimes, in the past, in In~~~ there's been arguments and conflicts, even quarrels on who should speak and who should speak first, "you've spoken longer than me:" Yes, this was very common. You see a lot of this. In the FWBO there we don't have that at all. We juSt arrange, "Bhante's giving the main talk, well, who's going to talk about publications or what afterwards? Alright, I'll do it. OK, who's going to talk about such and such?" It's all happily arranged. Sometimes one person plays one role, sometimes another. It's not always the same group of people~ even. So ~t~ 5 much more of a team effort, everybody supporting everybody else. Even though, yes, some people are more prominent or play a more prominent part than others do. So, "Observe those who bestow (knowledge of) the Way, for to help them is a great joy and many blessings can thus be obtained." You don't have necessarily to do the bestowing personally, even if you're able to do that, even if you're fit, even if you're qualified. Circumstances may be such tha~aJet '5 more appropriate for somebody else to do it and you~~ust to help, just to support.

S : Your basic concern is for the whole 5it~~t~i~W,~~not just for the part you play. But here I'm afraid~~' ve seen people being very, very individualistic, as when, for instance, the whole programme (this is not within the context of the FWBO, this h~a0~~h~~pened outside), but in

S(ctd) : for the whole programme, so you ask someone to speak~, say~ fifteen or twenty minutes but he goes on and on and he speaks for an hour and a half, so there's no time for anybody else. This is rank individualism. It is quite insensitive to the needs of the total situation. That is really deplorable, you Just use the opportunity to put yourself forward. So

that is the antithesis of supportiveness. So there must be an element of supportiveness, one -might say, in the case even of the person who is taking the lead because his taking of the lead partly consists in his being aware of the total situation, including the situation of the people who are supporting him. So, anyway, even if you're leading~ you support the people who are supporting you. Of course this can go to the other extreme. You can want not to take the lead, even when it's appropriate that you should. Certainly some people are like that, they sort of back down or back out, they don't want to take the lead, even when they really are experienced enough to do that. So one should be ready for that as well. Not to permanently cast oneself in a supportb~~ role.

Stephanie : Why do you think people would decide, or wish, not to take the lead, although they were a competent person?

S : Sometimes it's Just simple lack of confidence. They have the competence, they have the knowledge, but sometimes they don't have the confidence. Perhaps it's just force of habit. They've never taken the lead, they've always just taken a supportive part. Maybe it doesn't occur to them that they could do more than that. Maybe somebody needs to tell them or to put it to them. They'll probably resist at first. This u~ed to happen quite a bit in the early days of the FWBO ~~~~l~ sorts of people used to have to take a lead. I mean, in some cases, very, very soon after Ordination. Sometimes you don't discover your capacities until you're almost thrust into a situation in that sort of way.

Elsie : They can, it can be the result of assuming there are others to take it~~a'nd in that way they don't take the responsibility to do...

S : Right. It can be false humility also. hen of course: "The Buddha replied: (They are like the fire of a torch from which hundreds and thousands of people light their own torches. Thus the darkness is swallowed up. Such is the nature of those ~~~e55ing5~~~ Sometimes it's perhaps useful to reflect on every word that you say can propagate itself, of whatever nature, of whatever nature! You can say something, maybe in all innocence, but very quic~y it gets repeated and repeated and repeated. Within a very short period, dozens of people have heard and repeated that. But in the same way, if you say something about the Dharma, it can get around. It can pass from one person to another without any diminution. Tn that way, knowledge of the Dharma can spread. So in some ways, it becomes one's duty to speak about the Dharma whenever you can. To pass on without losing yourself. You don't lose yourself. It doesn't happen. Some people are a bit shy of passing on, aren't they?

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S(ctd) : Some are better at it than others. Some people can sit beside someone in a bus and start talking about the Dharma quite easily and naturally. Others really have to pluck up their courage to do that sort of thing, even in front of a prepared audience.

Elsie . Sometimes there are even people who, when they're asked whether they're Buddhists or not, they just have a fear even to say that they're Buddhists.

S : Right. Years ago, I don't know if you've heard it, I used to tell the story of a woman I knew who belonged to a Buddhist group somewhere in the Midlands, I think, and she told

me once, really quite proudly: "I've worked for the same firm for seventeen years and no one even guesses I'm a Buddhist." She kept it quiet from everyone and she really thought that was something to be proud of - that she hadn't let on that she was a Buddhist. That was the sort of attitude in Buddhist circles in England all those years ago; it may still be the attitude in some circles.

Stephanie : There is the point⁴ though, that you should gear yourself to whoever you're talking to and if you come out with lots of esoteric ideas, or if you start giving your- self or the things you're talking about labels, you can put people off.

S : BL't some people ask you for the appropriate labels. Then people say: "Well, are you a Christian or do you follow some other religion?" You can only say: "I'm Buddhist," and proceed to explain what you mean by Buddhist.

Stephanie : I was thinking more about the situation where you just bump into somebody, rather than the situation with the woman in the firm.

S : Hm, well, it's again a matter of your personal tact. Some people can do this. They just have the gift. They could do it quite naturally and people don't take offence. They know how to do it and with whom to do it. Not everybody has this. So if you have got this sort of gift, this sort of knack, well, you're really lucky. If you can just naturally start talking about Buddhism to people you meet on buses; a few of our friends have this, but not many of them. For some it would be a highly artificial procedure that people might react against. If you're going to say: ~xcuse me, have you heard about Buddhism?" But some people can do it so naturally it's not really like talking about Buddhism, it doesn't come across like that, though that in fact is what they're doing. Some- times they can have quite an effect on the person they're talking to. I'm thinking of one person in particular, I won't mention his name, bt&t 50r'ie 0+ ~O~ ~a> ~~~ I

Teresa : A Scotsman! It's quite difficult~ that one, because you can see that someone has that gift and you sort of feel, oh, you should be like that. Because it's like trying to find the way....

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S : Perhaps you should. You should be the real thing, not a poor imitation.

Teresa . It's difficult. It takes time to actually find the situation where you're comfortable and you feel relaxed in just talking about the Dharma, without it coming out sounding like. .

S a Buddhist version of a Jehovah's Witness! With your foot in the door.

Stephanie : I think a lot of people have had bad experiences with that kind of thing and so that's why I personally feel quite wary about saying: "Well, I'm a Buddhist, and in Buddhism th~~ and that," you know. I think I'd always rather say things which I felt were true, rather than start to give them labels too quickly.

S : Yes. But as I said, they may ask you, so to speak, for a label.

Sulocana . Some people already think, I mean, they know what Buddhism is, and that's difficult, because maybe it's a mistaken idea.

S . Yes. Right. Well, you just have to try to clear up the confusion.

Carla : If you actually are interested, I mean, I think that is actually related to being able to talk to people in the street generally. If you can walk up to and talk to just anybody in the street, I think that's naturally quite positive. Because if you practise that, don't talk about Buddhism, but if you practise just being able to talk to strangers, it comes quite naturally after a while. Americans do it all the time!

S . They don't regard people as strangers. Carla . That's right. S . Indians do it very easily.

Carla . Yes. In some cultures it comes very naturally. Scots, the Northerners tend to find it a lot easier too.

S . The difficulty seems to increase as you go North. It seems to culminate, according to my experience, in Finland.

Teresa . Are they worse than the English or better?

S : I suppose my experience is they're worse! This is what I'm told also by Finns--J&ve ~o~afIn~~f~~5 is what they have said themselves.

Vajragita : I know a lady in Holland. She's translating Buddhist books and she was on the wireless and then she said none of her family was Buddhist and knew about it, she kept it so secret. She was really proud about it. I think she wanted to show she's not converting people, some- thing like that.

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Trish : I was quite cautious about it in Australia as well, because people have a very set idea about Buddhist monks and things, because of the proximity to the East~ and it tended to be counter-productive.

S : Right. I remember shortly after I returned from India in 1964, I was interviewed by the editor of 'Nova' - that's right, 'Nova'. It was the fashionable women's magazine of then. I don't know whether it still continueS publication but anyway, (it was 'Nova', yes, that's right) and the lady who interviewed me, the editor, asked me questions like: "Well, are you allowed to speak to people from outside?" and was quite surprised there wasn't a big, high wall around the vihara with spikes on it and she said: "Are you allowed to go out?" This was the impression that had been created, I don't know how.

Vajragita : I got this question: "Do you want to talk about it?"

Trish : When I went back my father, when he met me at the airport, was really nervous and I discovered later that he'd been wondering whether I'd shaved my head and whether I was going to come off the plane in robes.

S : If you'd come back from Thailand instead of from England you might have done, so in a way his fears were justified. People do these things, don't they?

Ann . It can be quite a responsibility really, when people are actually genuinely interested in the Dharma and you're aware of how little you know and you wonder whether you can give them encouragement or whether you might be putting them off.

S : Yes. Perhaps the first thing one should do is just to make clear one's own limitations and say, as Sariputra did in a famous situation- "Asvajit, that is in the Buddhist scriptures~ did in a famous situation say, 'Well, I'm only a new disciple, I don't know very much, but what little I do know I can try to explain to you.'" And this should be one's attitude. People will appreciate that. Or you could say: "Well, look, I can't tell you very much, it's difficult to explain these things, but if you'd like to come along to our Centre maybe you could just get a feel of Buddhism in a better sort of way." Make it clear that they don't have to become Buddhists to go there. Anybody can go. Join in without any obligation. Just invite them along. That may be the best way rather than you try to explain it all to them. Some people are good at explaining, other people are not. But I think you have to be careful not to be too hesitant or apologetic about being a Buddhist. That would be going to the opposite extreme of over-confident and out-to-convert-the-heathen sort of attitude. I mean, not give the impression you think that maybe it's been a dreadful mistake becoming a Buddhist. Well, if you do actually think that, then you're honest about it, but if it isn't the case, well, you mustn't give that sort of impression. Anyway, anything more about that section?

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Trish : I was thinking, with respect to supportiveness, often I've found that I've had a fixed idea of what a role entails because I've seen someone do it particularly well and it's only when I've done it myself that I've realised that I didn't have to do it in their way at all and that sometimes that stops me from trying things out.

S : I think in the EWBO generally, I've been pointing this out down at the LBC recently, we're a bit lacking in the more formal sort of supportiveness. Do you know what I mean? For instance, somebody is giving a talk and there's somebody in the Chair, ostensibly to introduce him or introduce her, but they don't do the job properly. You see what I mean? Because the Chairman, in introducing the speaker, paves the way to, as it were, introduce the speaker to the audience and the audience to the speaker, if that is necessary. Make the Speaker feel at home if he's come from outside~ and establish a connection between them, the speaker and his audience. I think a lot of people in the FWBO still don't know how to do this. They do it quite inadequately, in a clumsy sort of way. Do you know what I mean? First of all they should be themselves at ease and themselves in touch with the situation and they should be able to say such things as: "Well, we have so many people here this evening interested in Buddhism. Some of them are people who have been coming to the Centre for some time and some of you are quite new." This gives a hint to the speaker that, well, he's got a mixed audience. He mustn't assume that everybody knows quite a bit about Buddhism.

And if the speaker is new and relatively unknown to the audience or some members of the audience, he should say: "Well, this is Upasika So-and-So who is from such and such Centre and he's been an Order Member for such and such years and has had quite a bit of experience in giving lectures and taking courses and classes and we're very happy to have him here with us this evening and he's going to speak to us about so and so. Otherwise, somebody gets up and sort of stumbles to his feet and says something like: "Well, you know, we've got Upasika So-and-So.... Oh, yes, he's going to talk about so and so. Thank you." And sits down and doesn't do all that proper introducing and paving of the way. That is a lack of supportiveness, one might say. Maybe not due to a lack of willingness, but just due to a lack of knowing how the thing is to be done, or maybe not taking sufficient thought, not taking sufficient care thinking about it beforehand; and at the end knowing how to wind up gracefully and thank the speaker, thank the audience, make the necessary announcements without getting it all muddled up, forgetting things. This is an important aspect of supportiveness. I think we're quite lacking in that respect.

Eve : Maybe it's the ease that's the key to it. Because I think maybe it's the person that's introducing that isn't at ease. Because sometimes I get the feeling that when people are introducing, that they're as nervous as the speaker is, and so...

S : Well, the person who takes the Chair should normally be the person who is very familiar with that situation. So

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S(ctd) : if it's a lecture under the auspices of the Centre, normally the Chairman of the Centre should take the Chair and certainly should be well acquainted with the situation and not, at all, nervous in speaking in that way to people that he's seeing all the time.

Sulocana : So that would mean that that person must be able to practise. They'd have to have some practice in these kinds of skills before they're able to do it.

S : Yes. So they should practise in comparatively small situations well within the Movement. You see what I mean? Not practise, not have their first experience, in a big public meeting where they might feel all alone there, but take it gradually, and also get feedback from their friends afterwards, not go on committing the same mistakes time and again. And also give thought beforehand. What am I supposed to do as Chairman of the meeting? Some people have only got the vaguest of ideas. Got a vague idea that they're supposed to announce the title of the lecture, that's about all. But as I said, this is an aspect of supportiveness, or a type of supportiveness, taking the Chair at somebody's lecture and doing it properly. I'd one or two unfortunate experiences in India with outside groups, that is to say lectures of mine were not organised by the FWBO but by local bodies that Lokamitra had some contact with, that hadn't yet come properly under our influence!

: Have they now?

S : They might have done, but I won't guarantee that! And then sometimes the Chairman rambles on and on and bores the audience before the speaker has a chance to say any- thing and the audience is thinking: "For heaven's sake, why doesn't he shut up and let the Speaker get on with it?" That is not being supportive. The Chairman is there to support the ~peaker and the whole meeting. Not to upstage the ~peaker.

Trish : Perhaps we're a bit afraid of some of the rituals like chairing meetings, and even just committee meetings.

S : Right. Well, again this goes back to something that I have talked about before, which is people being a bit reactive where anything that seems like formality is concerned. Maybe they are reacting against, well, some people say their middle-class, post-Victorian upbringing. But I think it's time we got over all that. Because if you don't know how to do things, it's better to fall back on a set way of doing things. Sometimes things like introducing people to one another. It's not good at all if somebody is left just standing around and no one knows who they are, you're not told who they are, why they've come. And they're maybe too shy or a bit emba~ssed and they can't just introduce themselves and say why they're there. This happened once or twice down in London in the Community and I spoke to them about it. Someone has been invited, say, to the Community, maybe for supper in the evening. Well, whoever h~s invited him should be around and introduce that person to other people, so he isn't

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S (ctd) : standing around and people are wondering what he's there for and whether he's come for supper or not. That's not very considerate. So we should have recourse to these little formalities, as it were. Do you see what I mean?

Carla : I quite often try to introduce people, and unfortunately quite often people turn and look at you as if you've just come off another planet. I think we've probably thrown the baby out with the bath water.

S . Well, in certain circles, and certainly within the Friend~(,~y~~£5P You're supposed to know who it is, but that's ridiculous. You often just ~n~t, you can't be expected to.

Noel . Isn't that like another aspect of taking things for granted?

S . Yes, indeed, yes.

Noel . Sometimes I feel that things go a bit too far the other way. Sort of over-familiarity, even whe~ it is what you might say a fairly intimate situation, where there aren't outsiders. Even in those situations, isn't it perhaps better to maintain some kind of formality?

S : ~It is quite easy to relax from formality if you feel, w~~~t,A1£~orm~~ity has played its part, it's no longer necessary, you can just relax from that in a natural way. It's better to

start off being a bit formal and then, relax a bit, rather than not having any formality and things just being a bit confused. T~~~I have felt for some time, and I've expressed this, that within the FWBO, well, we're not able very often to achieve genuine informality, neither are we able to be formal when formality seems to be required. People seem to fall heavily between the two stools! Quite a long time ago I said something about formality and informality in the course of a seminar, and this was transcribed and it was published somewhere. I don't know whether it was just in 'Shabda', the Order magazine, or it might have been published somewhere else.

Teresa . I think it's the 'Mitrata'. It's in the 'Mitrata Omnibus'.

S : Oh yes, that's right. Well, that's really very good, because it is something that we need to give attention to. It's affecting us all the time. It affects, for instance, new people coming to the Centre. Sometimes they just sort of stand there and nobody goes forward to greet them and welcome them, because a lot of our Friends unfortunately think that's being too formal, but I don't really agree with that. I think things are much better than they were, because I've talked about this quite a lot, but there still is room for improvement. I mean, I really noticed the other way of doing things when I went to Malaysia (Elsie will be interested to hear this),~because everything was so smoothly organised and yes, there was a lot of formality, but at the same time there was a lot of positive feeling with the formality. It certainly wasn't empty formality. My whole tour and trip was so well organised by those

S of 42 5 D3 Tl 20 Th s'a~ ~L&Lt~ ~tst~ka~ta. S(ctd) : people in Penang. % It was all the more no~ because I'd come straight from India, where I'm afraid they don't do things in such a well~organised way, even though they may be highly positive. But there wasn't a hitch the whole of the time I was in Penang. Even though I only spent four days there,bM~~t was a very full programme. But I really appreciated that. I was entertained formally to dinner and to lunch a number of times and the arrangements were so perfect. I mean, as soon as I was taken into a restaurant~because Chinese, apparently, do all their entertaining in restaurants, not at home - there everybody was, waiting, didn't have to wait around for anybody, everybody was there. And as soon as I entered, everybody was introduced, and as soon as we sat down after the introductions, along came the food. Everything was so well organised! Just to explore this question of formality and informality just a little bit more, as another aspect of life. There used to be a lot of formality between, as it were, ladies and gentlemen. But now a lot of that has broken down. You know the sort of thing I'm referring to. In the old days the gentleman was supposed to open the door for the lady and all that sort of thing. Well, sometimes one isn't sure nowadays whether any given lady is expecting that, or whether, if you do open the door for her, she'll take it as an insult! Do you see what I mean? Also, if you go out with a lady, whether you pay for her or whether each pays for himself or herself. So there's no sort of generally accepted sort of standard~ it seems. This is something that makes life a little difficult because people don't know how they should behave and that introduces an element of embarrassment or hesitation which doesn't help social life. So we see this in so many different spheres. Well, I remember there was one little incident some years ago when Vajrayogini came over from Holland and she invited me out for a meal. And we tramped around, I think, Camden Town, looking for somewhere suitable, but we didn't find anywhere nice. Anyway, we found somewhere, so we had quite a nice meal together. At the end of the meal Vajrayogini said: "Oh, I've invited you, so I'll pay." So I said: "Alright." So afterwards she said that really surprised her because she'd

expected I'd put up some kind of resistance in letting her pay for me. But no, I was quite happy that she should pay for me, but apparently she wasn't accustomed to being able to do that sort of thing so easily. But then I pointed out that I'd spent many years in India and I'd been quite accustomed to always being paid for! And I had no inhibitions about being paid for, whoever it was willing to pay for me or to treat me to a meal, I didn't mind in the least. But she told me she had really been surprised by that and had expected, even though she wanted to pay, and was determined to pay, she had expected quite a bit of resistance from me to her doing that. So this goes to show that people aren't clear about what is expected or what people's reactions might be. I think when, for instance, in terms of the Centre, when we get people of maybe different age groups and different social backgrounds, it may not be very clear what sort of behaviour is appropriate or what is expected. So perhaps

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S(ctd) : we do need just a little bit more formality, of the right sort.

Punyavati : I find it works very much on appearances. When I wear jeans and look scruffy, no one bothers, but when I go to work and put my hair up and wear a dress, people do open doors for me!

S : Apparently, in some parts of Europe, especially Southern Europe, age is still respected. I noticed this when I was in Crete, because Kevala, who was with me then, told me that if he went into a shop by himself, no one took much notice of him, but- if he went in with me, at once we'd be served. And he said people do show respect for age. In Southern European countries it is an advantage to be somewhat older. In certain respects you're at a disadvantage if you're younger. It's a bit like that in India too. I mean, people do show greater respect%~~~~ you are older, other factors being equal. Alright, let's go on to section twelve.

Carla "The Buddha said: "To bestow food on a hundred bad men is not equal to bestowing food on one good one. Bestowing food on a thousand good men is not equal to bestowing food on one who observes the five precepts. Bestowing food on ten thousand who observe the five precepts is not equal to bestowing food on one Srota-apanas. Bestowing food on a million Srota-apanas is not equal to bestowing food on one Sakridagamin. Bestowing food on ten million Sakridagamins is not equal to bestowing food on one Anagamin. Bestowing food on a hundred million Anagamins is not equal to bestowing food on one Arhan. Bestowing food on a thousand -million Arhans is not equal to bestowing food on one Pratyeka Buddha. Bestowing food on ten thousand million Pratyeka Buddhas is not equal to bestowing food on one of the Buddhas of the Triple World. Bestowing food on a hundred thousand million Buddhas of the Triple World is not equal to bestowing food on one who ponders nothing, does nothing, practises nothing and manifests nothing." Ci) S : That's the Zen touch! It does seem an addition, doesn't it? But

anyway, what is the principle involved here? It's a principle we might find rather surprising or not even agree with, which is certainly unfamiliar to us. That the merit, to speak in those terms, of an action or a gift is lesser or greater according to the spiritual status, so to speak, of the recipient. I mean this works both ways. This is very definitely the traditional Buddhist view. If you, for instance, give dana to someone of, let us say, greater spiritual status, the merit derived therefrom is greater than the merit derived from giving dana to one of lesser spiritual status. But if you commit an offence, also, against someone of greater spiritual status, the karmic consequences are correspondingly heavier. Do you see any sort of reason or, in a sense, justice, in this, or does it strike you as odd?

Trish : Presumably the Dharma would view someone of greater

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Trish(ctd) : spiritual status as more likely to be able to spread the Dharma more effectively.

S : That's the objective side of it. Alright, let's look at a negative instance that might be more easy to understand. This whole question came up in a recent study group down in London, in connection with cheating or deceiving. It was said to be a more serious offence to cheat or deceive a spiritual person than to cheat or deceive a worldly person. Why do you think that is?

: It has something to do with going against the values that that person stands for.

S : Yes. It is something to do with that. And in a sense to do with going against certain values within yourself. Because if you can bring yourself to perform admittedly quite unskilful action with regard to someone who you see is perhaps more spiritually advanced, that means you've got to go against your own feeling that the action is unskilful to an even greater extent than you would if the object of that action hadn't been so spiritually advanced. Do you see what I mean? Yes?

Ann : So it would depend on your having actually recognised that they were more spiritually advanced?

S : Well, there is the objective aspect also that, for instance, that particular person is more valuable to the world than one of lesser spiritual attainment. So it isn't just, according to tradition, isn't just a question of your subjective feeling that that person, or your subjective recognition that that person is spiritually more advanced, though at the same time, in Buddhism, intention is also considered very important. You might conceivably accidentally kill an Arahant. It would be a correspondingly greater loss for the world, but if you had not known that person was an Arahant or that you were not in fact committing that action at all, presumably there would be no karmic consequences. There's a sort of parallel to this in the teaching that, supposing you kill your parents, that is a more serious offence than killing people who are not your parents. Now why should that be? You might mean that according

to law the offence is of equal seriousness. So why should it be, according to Buddhism, a more serious offence to kill your parents than to kill somebody else?

Teresa : There's a lot of reason to be grateful.

S : There's a lot of reason to be grateful.

Carla : You're killing people who gave you life, who nurtured you...

S : The emotional bond is much stronger, so in order to kill them you'd have to break that bond, which would be a much more serious matter.

Carla : More evil..

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~ven S : More evil than, evil as it is, killing people who are not your parents. You'd have been going against so much in yourself, so strongly. Going against so much that was positive in yourself to such an extent that killing your parents would be a more serious offence. So, in the same way, to cheat or deceive someone more spiritually advanced than yourself is a more serious offence because you're having to go against, you're having to deny, your own recognition that that person is more developed than you are, and that far from treating him in that way, you should treat them with respect and devotion. So do you see what Buddhism is getting at here? So, in the same way, if you perform a positive action, if you perform a skilful action with reference to someone very, very highly advanced, if you give -dana to them, well, that is correspondingly a greater thing, because presumably you would feel that much more inspired, there'd be so much greater flow of generosity then, appropriate to such an object and then the consequences would be correspondingly greater. It would be a strange thing indeed, if you gave dana to an ordinary beggar in the same spirit and with the same attitude that you gave dana to the Buddha. I mean, giving dana to the Buddha would presumably be an overwhelming emotional and spiritual experience for you. You'd be transported with joy, so surely the consequences would be greater.

Teresa : Could you sort of say then, that in the situation of a Centre, if you give dana , if you choose to give dana to the FWBO rather than just because maybe someone is in need, material need, that's the same sort of principle as giving to the ideal we hold the highest?

S : Yes, this is the traditional Buddhist view. I mean, clearly sometimes you have to weigh~(a)s. ~upposing some- one is dying, well, clearly it certainly becomes your first duty to care for them, to give to them. Then there's the objective effects of your dana to be taken into consideration. Sometimes it may be very difficult to decide, but this is the broad, general principle; that any action performed with reference to someone more highly developed than yourselves has especially powerful consequences, whether for good or for evil. For good if your action is positive, for evil if your action is negative.

(end of tape)

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S : . . . there's the bad man, the good man, the man who observes the five precepts; the 'srotapanna', the stream-entrant; the 'sakfl'dagami', the once-returner; the 'an~gami', the non-returner; then the 'arahant'; then the 'pratyekabuddha' and then there's the Buddha of the Triple World. And of course a climax - cum - anti-climax, () "one who ponders nothing, does nothing, practises nothing and manifests nothing." It seems like a little bit of special pleading on the part of the Zen people as if to say, well, the merit of offering food to a Zen master is so much greater even than offering food to a Buddha~

t do ~t~ ~e poetry of the preceding bit ?

S : No, not really. One could well believe that this is an addition. Though in a way one sees what whoever is responsible for that sentence is getting at. But one could say that the Buddha, even the pratyekabuddha even the arahant, might be of that kind. They fulfilled that kind of ideal. It does see~rna~ good word is being put in for Zen here.

Elsie . That sentence does remind me of something that was dist~n~~strated in the 'Vimalakirti Nirdeśa'. Manjusri says something like that and he asks Vimalakirti, and Vimalakirti just remains silent.

S : Yes. The "one who ponders nothing, does nothing, practises nothing and manifests nothing", speaks nothing - that, of course, is not to be taken literally. Hui Neng goes into this. It doesn't mean that one should become like a block of wood. How can one ponder nothing or do nothing in the literal sense? Even if you sit still, well, that's doing something. Even the Zen monk eats, drinks, pounds rice. There's a note here to the effect that this whole paragraph may be taken as an illustration of the tremendous importance of striving to attain the very best possible. Well, this is really a bit beside the point.

It also says that our actions are going to reflect what our aspirations are, doesn't it? What we tg~i~afle~e~~re~ tly reflects how we feel.

S : You mean, what you give, how you give, who you give to, will reflect your scale of values. Some people would think, well, if they've got some money, let's say, it's better to give it to the poor. Others may think it's much better to give the Buddha image a nice new coat

of gold. Some people think that is doing something much more valuable. In the East, well, in the West too in medieval times, that attitude was very strong. It's better to do something for the glory of god rather than just to help human beings.

TriSh : It does presume you recognise a higher ()

S : I got into serious trouble once with some Burmese Buddhists (this was at the time of the sixth Buddhist Council in Rangoon) by suggesting that some of the money - I only said some of the money - that was being

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S(ctd) : spent on building new temples ~ installing new~Bu~ddha images could be spent on - I didn't say social work- but propagating the Dharma in India. And people were very annoyed with me about that. At least some people wer?, and an editorial was written in a Buddhist magazine criticising me and the author of this article referred to a Jataka story, I think it was, about a man and a pratyekabuddha Apparently a pratyekabuddha died and the people living in that area wanted to build a stupa for him. So they got together and were building it, but then this man came along and said: "Well, why build it so big? Why build it so high? Why take so much trouble when a smaller stupa will do?" and as ~result of that, he was reborn as a dwarf! So this was quoted and AL said well, here is Sangharakshita saying we shouldn't build so many temples, install so many images. We should spend the money in some other way. I wonder what lessons in rebirth he wtl experience?

Alright, let's go on ~o tbijteen. There's quite a lot of foc~ for discussion~and we may not be able to get through it this afternoon. Would you like to read the whole section?

The Buddha said: "There are twenty thingsrnwhich are hard for human beings: "It is hard to practise charity when one is poor. "It is hard to study the Way when occupying a position of great authority. "It is hard to surrender life at the approach of inevitable death. "It is hard to get an opportunity of reading the sutras. "It is hard to be born directly into Buddhist surroundings. "It is hard to bear lust and desire(without yielding to them). "It is hard to see something attractive without desiring it. "It is hard to bear insult without being angry. "It is hard to have power and not pay regard to it. "It is hard to come into contact with things and yet remain unaffected by them. "It is hard to study widely and investigate everything thoroughly. "It is hard to overcome selfishness and sloth. "It is hard to avoid making light of not having studied (the Way) enough. "It is hard to keep the mind evenly balanced. "It is hard to refrain from affirmation and denial. "It is hard to come into contact with clear perception(of the Way) "It is hard to perceive one's own nature and (through such perception) to study the Way. "It is hard to help others towards Enlightenment according to their various needs. "It is hard to see the various phenomena without being moved by them. "It is hard to remain unmoved by our surroundings. "It is hard to understand the proper use of skilful means (for teaching and practising the Dharma) ."

S : Well, there is quite a lot of material there, isn't there?
 Well, let's make a start: "There are twenty things which are
 hard for human beings: It is hard to practise charity when one is poor."
 Would you agree with this? Is it just a truism?

Teresa : When I read that, I was thinking that actually it often works the other way
 round. You can really sympathise if you haven't got much. It is easier to give.

s~e te~t S : Well, on a previous study retreat when we did thisL, I
 suggested it should be changed to: "It is hard to practise charity when one is rich." Well,
 there is some truth in that, in a paradoxical sort of way. It isn't necessarily easier to practise
 charity, to use that term, just because you have the wherewithal to practise it. Sometimes, if
 you are poor, you do understand the difficulties of the poor better. You are more sympathetic.
 If you're rich, you can be--v~~y unsympathetic sometimes.

Noel : I can see that on a material level, but if you're poor in
 terms of sort of generosity and positive feelings, then it would be hard to
 give, wouldn't it?

S : Yes. There seems to me a sort of in a way deliberate
 ambiguity, in the use of the word 'hard'. You can take ~har~~ in the sense of not
 having the wherewithal, and 'hard' in the sense of not having the will. You see what I mean?
 If you don't have the wherewithal, well, then it's hard to practise charity when one is poor. If
 you don't have the will, well, then it's hard to practise charity when one is rich. You
 need both things, you need the wherewithal and you need the will too. Sometimes one can
 feel very strongly that one really wishes that one had more money because there are so many
 good things one can do with it. I sometimes say if somebody gave me million pounds I know
 exactly what I would do. I could spend it tomorrow. I wouldn't hesitate. There are so many
 things waiting to be done. So if anyone has a million, see me afterwards.' I think sometimes,
 clearly, yes, the will to give is important, but sometimes it can be very frustrating if you don't
 have the wherewithal. Sometimes you can really feel like doing some thing, helping
 somebody, and you can't because you haven't got the money. I remember there was one
 occasion in my life on which I especially wished, I really wished I had money. I think it was
 the only occasion where I really wished it to that extent. And that was when the Tibetan
 refugees started coming out of Tibet and Tibetans were hawking beautiful thankas from door
 to door with nobody to buy them, offering them for just a few rupees. I didn't have even a
 few rupees. And of course after a few years, the prices went really astronomical, but I could
 have bought so many beautiful thankas, as well as helping those people by buying them from
 them, but I didn't have the money. These people ~ou~dn~ t believe or couldn't believe that I
 didn't have the money. They kept reducing their price and I kept saying: "Well, no. I

haven't got any money. I just haven't any money at all." They couldn't believe it, so they kept
 reducing the

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S(ctd) : price and in the end I just had to say: "Well, I'm very sorry, there's no question of my buying them." And I really felt then I wished I had more money. Just a few thousand rupees, which is nothing - well, is no~th~n~ to me now - but I didn't even have twenty rupe~J.P ut I could have got the most beautifult~~s4~~. They could have been decorating our Centres and so on here now. But that wasn't possible. So sometimes one really does wish... well, I had other experiences when very poor people came to me in difficulties and you sometimes feel like helping, but you can't if you haven't got(nt~ey). So perhaps a certain amount of financial independence isn't a bad thing from this sort of point of view. I know rationalisation is very easy, but it is good sometimes if you have got a bit of money of your own which you don't have to ask anybody about. You can just spend it or give it if you really feel moved to do so. You don't have to stifle your generous impulses just because you don't have the wherewithal That can be a quite sad, as well as a frustrating, experience. Because it's not enough to feel goodwill towards that person. He needs money, he doesn't just need your goodwill. He'd rather have the money and no goodwill than the goodwill and no money. You can see that quite clearly and you can understand that. Hm? So: "It is hard to practise charity when one is poor." Yes, because you don't have the wherewithal, much as you wish to give, you can't - and that's a very unfortunate position to be in. Anybody have any experience of this sort of thing? Or perhaps you don't in this country?

: In co-ops sometimes. Because you get your support and just a bit of extra money....

S : Maybe you'd like to buy somebody a present, but you don't have the money. Maybe you'd like to spend a few pounds making a telephone call home, but you haven't got the money. So, in a way, that's dana1 if you want to phone someone on their birthday and wish them 'many happy returns', but you can't, you just haven't got the money, even though you'd like to do that. You'd like to sen~pCa\$1 lovely present~ but you can't, you just haven't got the~money. So I don't know how people feel about this. I don't want to seem to be inculcating capitalism~on this small scale, but can one not say that there ought to be something like mo~~~~Wso~~hat you can give expression to your generous sentiments'. Under our present system, at least, money is necessary very often to do that. You can no doubt make something out of paper and string and give people, but it's not quite the same perhaps. No doubt the thought does count, but you also want to give some- thing really nice and maybe the person needs something that costs money. What do you feel about this? This whole question of money; money just to spend and do good with?

Trish : It was really nice round the Centre when Marion got her bike stolen and everyone chipped in and we got enough

money together to buy her another one.

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Noel : I certainly don't think there is any virtue in being poor.

S : Well, no virtue in being rich either. What do you think of this sort of philosophy which some people have (th~t) there's nothing wrong with wealth, it's what you do with it that counts? Is it really as simple as that, do you think, or is there something to be said for that point of view?

Carla : I think you mentioned earlier about what should be said from that point of view about not monopolising more than your fair share of the Earth's resources. That comes into being rich, I think. I think that must be taken into account. I don't think any of us here are in danger of doing that at this point in time, but then you have to think of that.

Trish : It's surprising, however much you get, you always seem to need more.

Stephanie : I see it as something that you have to organise within your life. There are various things you need, you have to have a certain amount of money to function, and you have to give that an appropriate place within your life as to how it's placed with all your other activities and your other values. ~

~ot& ~ve, pe~r~~s S : Including, ~r not forgetting, the need to give and be generous. And again, beware of rationalisations, one can say. But that is nonetheless a fact that one has a need to give and perhaps in organising your life you need to make provision for that. So, "It is hard to practise charity when one is poor,"

yes? So maybe that needs to be borne in mind, ideally within the Co-ops when, for instance, one is trying to calculate what one needs to live on. Well, perhaps include a little bit for giving away, a little bit to spend on presents for other people, to send them birthday cards and so on because all these things cost money. Even~ stamps are pretty expensive nowadays. If you were to send a birthday card a week through the post to a friend of yours, well, you'd need a little bit more money from your Co-op, wouldn't you? It'd cost you a pound probably, the card plus the stamps.

Carla : I remember Sanghadevi last Christmas really wanted to send a book for her mother and she just didn't have the money to get it. It only cost four or five quid. I said: "Go to the Co-op, ask for it, you should feel justified." I don't think she did in the end, but I think people in Co-ops should think about sometimes you do need to. *arl ~did really try to encourage her as much as I could to g~~ask, but I fear she didn't.

S : Sometimes of course, one knows what the condition of the Co-op is. That it's in debt and you really honestly may feel, 'I'm not justified in asking'; but then that is a shame because the Co-op ideally (we know it's difficult to achieve this) but ideally should be functioning

in such a way that it is able, among other things, to meet all the genuine needs of the Co-op members, and this I would say is surely a need to be included along with

others.

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Eve I think it would get difficult if that line of thought set up conflict~ so that you thought that working in a Co-op you couldn't get your financial needs, so that you go and try to something else. Because I think, like, our Co-ops are ~very young, the businesses are very young~ and I know that't~'Friends Foods' there isn't any reason why in six months that wouldn't be the case. I'm sure in most Co-ops that would~%e the case if they're financially working. But I could see it as... I was thinking I could do some massage on the side to make a few extra bob and that sort of attitude I think for some people could be quite harmful because it sets up a conflict.

S : Hm. So perhaps the Co-op worker finds this saying of the Buddha especially appropriate, that: "It is hard to practise charity when one is poor." It's hard to practise charity when you're a member of an FWBO Co-op!
It's hard enough to get anything to spend on yourself, like buying yourself a new pair of jeans or a new pair of, what do you call them? dungarees! Lt~ Itkc - Eve . In a way it's to keep Ao~ I~ set~~3~ the giving comes from an energy, from wanting to go out and give, doesn't it? So it's like keeping your energy flowing in that way.

S : You can of course, to a great extent, give, so to speak, in kind. You can give in time, you can give in energy, but sometimes that mode of giving isn't appropriate. As for instance, on the occasion of a birthday, you want to send a present to someone at a distance. Well, there's nothing else you can do, usually, except send some thing which usually has to be bought, or very often has to be bought. Perhaps you could make something, but perhaps you don't have time or skill. Even the materials would still have to be bought.

Elsie : I found that when I came over it happens to be my mother's birthday and I felt I just can't give her any other things other than I'll appropriate some money to her and I felt it was really difficult. But anyway, I thought I really want to express it, so I sent her some money and instead they know that, I told them the situation that

~~as working in the Co-ops and things, so instead they sent the money back with some addition as well! So I'm grateful that I have such understanding parents. They must have knew the situation. I felt I really had to... this is what I want and I sort of expressed it actually, so that was what I received in return. 9t~?I19 th(~g~, Trish : It can be nice though, in the Friends,~because people realise how much it's taken to give and they really appreciate it.

Carla : I've had some wonderful birthday cards and presents, wonderful, wonderful receiving them.

S : This is another aspect of formality and informality, I mean the giving of presents. One doesn't do it~¼5~ a formality, but some people might hesitate to give, thinking of it as a sort of formality. You see what I mean? They sort of fight shy of anything that smacks of formality.Qk~ think it's a nice custom. It seems to be

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S(ctd) more common among the women than among the men in the Movement, but the men are beginning to cotton on to thisAfl~ to begin to give one another things sometimes. Well, let's go on to the next saying: "It is hard to study the Way when occupying a position of great authority." What does this mean? Why should it be so hard to study the Way when occupying a position of great authority?

Stephanie : You can't admit that you don't know things.

S : Yes. You can't admit that you don't know things. ~t ~o(AId ~~ J~'~ic~It to find a teacher, perhaps. It would be difficult to forget the fact that you had this position of great authority.

Noel : Maybe that would take up so much of your time.

S : Yes, there's that too. There's that simple fact that if you're occupying a position of great authority you may simply not have the time, you may not have the energy and also, because you're occupying a position of great authority, because you're constantly exercising authority, you may be accustomed to ~n~t~i~ning in a particular way, that is to say, in accordance with the Power Mode, and you might find~at difficult to give up ere you are exercising authority all day. Maybe if you were, say, a magistrate or a minister in ancient China, you would be passing sentences on people, giving orders, having people beheaded. And just in the evening, for half an hour, you stop all that and you study the Way, the Dharma. It's going to be very difficult, isn't it?

Stephanie : Also, there's a lot of inertia in that kind of situation. You can't just decide, well, I'm going to go off and do something else. Not very quickly or easily. If you've got a less highly prestigious occupation, you can move around more. So you can act on the Way.

S : I was reading a story the other day. This was a Sufi story. A story ~o~t ~ Sufi master and his disciple who also subsequently became a Sufi master. Apparently, the Sufi master attracted the notice of, I think it was the son of the governor of a certain province. So this young man was quite well connected and very influential and through his father, on account of his father, exercised a great deal of authority, one might say. So he came along to th~ Sufi master and he wanted to become a disciple, so the Sufi master told him to go and beg from door to door and he made him do this for a number of years, and only then he accepted him as a disciple. So one can see the reason for this. He wanted to, one might say, make him receptive. He wanted to make him~f~ asit~ere powerless, and the story relates that when he started doing this, people mocked and jeered at him and that this broke down his

previous conditioning and made him receptive, ultimately, to the master's teaching. Because it seems that the Sufi master also understood that "It is hard to study the Way when occupying a position of great authority."

Punyavati : Also someone occupying a position of great authority would have a lot of pride and it would be very difficult for

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Punyavati(ctd) them to unbend or be more flexible.

S : Yes. And also, a lot depends upon the particular cultural tradition. In India, certainly in ancient times, it was very well understood that the kings just really had no position at all when it came to their relations with spiritual teachers or even with ordinary monks or ascetics. The king put everything of that sort aside, but that's not equally well understood in every culture, certainly not today.

Punyavati : Did that happen with the kings with the Buddha?

S : Yes. The kings seem to have treated the Buddha with great deference. In fact there's a rather revealing incident when, I think it was Bimbisara, I think it's Bimbisara, one king anyway, went to call upon the Buddha and he had a word, I think with Ananda, and Ananda says: "Well, the Buddha is staying in that little cottage. Just go up and knock on the door. Don't be nervous." You see, it was taken for granted that the king would be nervous rather than the other way around! So that's very revealing. I mean a attitude in those days. Then there's another story about Sufis I was reading this relates to Delhi, when there was a Muslim sultan of Delhi. Though he was a Muslim, he didn't have any great respect for Sufis and a Sufi master apparently went to court and the sultan apparently expected that the Sufi master, entering his presence, should prostrate himself, this being the court custom and he saw no reason why the Sufi master also shouldn't prostrate himself. So it would be very difficult for the Sultan under those conditions to learn anything from the Sufi master. He would be standing on his authority, his power, his position, so much, to such an extent, that it would hardly be possible for him to be receptive to whatever the master had to teach.

Eve : Did that happen to Padmasambhava when he went to Tibet?

S : Yes. The king was not very happy with the idea that he might have to, or be expected to, bow to the master. But Padmasambhava dealt with the situation in a appropriate way. So: "It is hard to study the Way when occupying a position of ~re~%t~~~~h0rit~~" It's hard to switch just for a few minutes from the Power Mode to the Love Mode. And then the third one: "It is hard to surrender life at the approach of inevitable death." In a way that's quite significant. Death is inevitable. There's no question of your not dying. But even so, you find it hard to surrender life when the time to die comes. One does find that sometimes with people who are dying. They cling on, they struggle. So this seems to show how little sometimes your emotional attitude corresponds with your intellectual knowledge. You know that death is inevitable. You know you've got to die. But you just don't want to accept that. Your whole being perhaps revolts against the idea, even at the

approach of death itself. Even at the very time of death, on your death bed, you still don't want to die. ya~ nia~ be ~ta, ~~~ Ma~ b~ ~o o~ ~orc: ~o~ St; 11 Ao~'~ stant Va Ot~~. Liz : You get that happening to a much lesser extent in ordinary

~~~~~ ~ast ~ ~ht ~e~t tU& v~ de~tk.~

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Liz(ctd) : things as we1~, when something has actually happened and there's nothing you can do about it but people still refuse to accept that it's actually happened. Like, you~~c lost something.

S . Or lost somebody. You just don't accept it. You find it very hard to accept that reality does not correspond to your wishes! It says: "It is hard to surrender life at the approach of inevitable death." It's as though the Buddha is saying, well, you've got to die anyway, you might as well die willingly. Your life is going to be taken from you, alright, surrender it. That's the graceful thing to do.

Stephanie . I feel people often feel worse about dying or growing older, if they're not happy with the way they've lived. They want another chance.

S . Well, they'll get another chance! It's rather a pity when an eighty~year-old person thinks in ~ern~s~ of another chance in this life. ~~'~e e~t i~ raA~rroame a wor1~Lj point of view, anyway.

Liz . It all sounds as if it comes back to the point that whatever action you perform, you've got a choice as to whether you enjoy it or do it well or you don't.

S . Yes. Well, why not go along with the inevitable? Sometimes it rains and you wanted to go out, but instead of accepting the fact that it's raining and you can't go out, so ~u might as well stand at the window looking at the rain~appreciating how beautiful it is) yoa ~rP muttering and mumbling and grumbling about the weather and you can't go out and why does it have to rain etc. You don't accept the inevitable.

Punyavati . It's the feeling of the inevitable ( )

S . I think that's self-will to me. You want your own way like a spoiled child. Reality has got to conform to your wishes - or else!

|                  |                          |                                        |                          |
|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Carla .          | You want a puppet show.  | S .                                    | Yes, you want a puppet   |
| show. Carla .    | And you're the director. | S .                                    | And you want to play all |
| the chief parts. | Carla .                  | That's right. That's just what I want. |                          |

~.

Stephanie : Do you think it's a bit egoistic to think in terms of luck?

S : Luck? What is luck? Some people seem to have it and others seem not to have it. Which suggests it isn't really luck at all. Buddhists would say that perhaps that is karma. I've known people for whom everything seems to go wrong and it was not their fault. They hadn't done anything to bring all that upon them, but things just went wrong. Other people, no, things go right - they

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S(ctd) : have good luck. Luck is with them. Maybe there is a karmic factor. One is tempted to think so sometimes.

Stephanie : I think that for me that makes it harder to accept things that just happen, because I tend to think in terms of myself having a type of luck. Generally I feel I am lucky, so I don't mind too much, but I do take things a bit personally because of that.

S : Well, maybe you have a store of good karma of which you are not aware. It seems like that sometimes. Alright, what about the next sentence: "It is hard to get an opportunity of reading the sutras." Well, remember the context, remember the cultural background. Under what circumstances was this said? It does say, you notice, reading the sutras, so it's a comparatively late stage in the development of Buddhism because before that it would have been a question of hearing the sutras. But anyway, "It is hard to get an opportunity of reading the sutras." For us to be able to read the sutras, well, what must happen first? What must there be?

Sulocana . They must be written down.

S : They must be written down. Yes, we must have the sutras. They must be available. They must be available in our own language or in a language which we can understand. Even now there are many important Buddhist sutras not translated into English. Again I realised this in India. Because in the course of my tour I realised how little literature there was on Buddhism in Marathi for people to read. Very little indeed. Not nearly as much as we've got in English. There's no comparison at all. So, if you're not English-educated and if you're a Maharashtran Buddhist (and most Maharashtran Buddhists are not English-educated), your opportunities of studying the Dharma are very limited. And this is why I attach so much importance to our publications work in India. It's much more important than our publications work is here, for that reason.

Elsie : Are there many people who are illiterate?

S : Yes, there are quite a lot of people illiterate, especially among women and older people. The other weekend, in London, I went along to East London, to Plaistow, where there's a hundred Indian Buddhist families, all Ambedkarites. Ninety of these families are from the Punjab and ten of these families are from Maharashtra. There aren't any from Gujarat. But I was told that some of the women don't know English, or know so little that they can't mix socially with English people. They can't go to shops where their own language is not spoken, and they're encouraging them to learn English. Well, I was thinking, well, maybe some of our women in London, connected with the LBC, could help. At least go along and give them a bit of conversation practice, at least that. So, one needs to be

literate to begin with. One needs to be                      literate in the language in which    material on the Dharma is available and that material has to be in circulation. There have to be

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S(ctd) :            books, there have to be publications.

Liz    :            We really have the opportunity at the moment to be able to follow so much up purely on our own volition~"1A we have it. We've got all the educational (            )

S       : Especially nowadays in England. Well, leave aside the Dharma. It's so easy to study anything that you want~ as a mature student. One has got wonderful opportunities and facilities. Perhaps most of all, you 've got the opportunity of reading the sutras.

(end of side one)

S(ctd) : . . . .or in    Dutch, or in a number of other European languages. I don't think there's very much in Russian, for instance. But now it isn't really hard for us to get an opportunity of reading the sutras. We're very fortunate in that respect. We've got a lot of sutras to read.

Punyavati : I used to read, in the earlier days when I came across Buddhism, I can't remember where, or I might have just heard from people, something about, you don't need to study Buddhism to become Enlightened. I don't know if anyone

S       : Not to become Enlightened?

Punyavati    : Or to follow the Path and to become Enlightened. Maybe            it was a misunderstanding (    )

S       : Well, what does being a Buddhist mean in that case? You use the raft to cross over to the other shore. Using the raft means studying the Dharma, practising the Dharma, of getting over to th~0ott~e?%~~Co~~~~~ the help of the Dharma, but then not being stuck in the Dharma, not taking the Dharma as an end in itself, taking it as a means to an end. So being free from the Dharma, so to speak, once you've made use of it; not taking Buddhism itself as an end in itself. But no doubt there are some extraordinary ideas about Buddhism in circulation. I don't know if you encounter any of them in the course of your work with the new group. Have you encountered any odd ideas about Buddhism?



S : No. S : Well, that's good. : Not yet.  
S : Not yet.

Eve : I think what is quite hard with ( ) sutras available is, it is hard, how you said about it is hard for the world to practise charity. It's a similar thing because there's so much material and it's very easy to be distracted and go to the movies.

S : Yes.

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Eve : In a way it seems that's...

S : Or read the wrong books. I mean, I've been continually astonished, say, by the popularity of Lobsang Rampa! Not so much now, perhaps, but formerly you saw his books everywhere. I remember that in 1966 I was in Greece. I spent a month in Greece. I travelled around quite a lot in the interior, and even~"the little kiosks they had the works of Lobsang Rampa on sale in English. Nothing else. I mean, nothing else remotely connected with Buddhism or Tibet, but Lobsang Rampa was on sale.

Christine : Teaches you the way of selling things though, doesn't it?

S : Unfortunately he happen~ to be quite a good writer. He's got a fifty pen, you may say! He's quite readable or he's even~ readable, whereas some more worthy writers on Buddhism may not be so readable! ~c~ ~) &iot~ ~ra~nA r0 t~ s~~e e~~~~t. Marlene : In our charity shop before Christmas we had a book stall and there were a couple of Lobsang Rampa's books. And there was one man bought both of them and he came up to the counter with them and I thought: "Oh well, what a shame he's buying these and he hasn't bought a Newsletter." But we needed the money. . . so!

S : Anyway, there are even two or three Order Members who, I believe, started off their quest by reading Lobsang Rampa. They're deeply ashamed to admit it now, but in confidential moments they will admit it; that is, telling their life-stories! But then, there is a point here, one must say : "It is hard to get an opportunity of reading the sutras." What does one mean by readin~ the sutras? Does one mean just flipping through them? What is reading? Does one mean reading to oneself or reading aloud? Does one mean reading and discussing? Reading and thinking about? Perhaps you may not get all the time that you would like for reading the sutras and you can't just sort of pick up a sutra when you've got an odd five minutes, can you, ~sually? It's not as easy to get into the sutras as that.

Trish : Bhante, one of the things about some of the sutras, they

seem to have more of a life of their own when you actually read them aloud, rather than just read them.

S : You musn't forget that many of the sutras, and especially the Pali suttas, were not really written in the sense of being composed as literary works at all. They're the literary record of teachings orally transmitted, hence the repetitions which help to fix the teachings in the minds of the people reciting them~fl~~lp them to remember them. So some of the suttas do sound better, so to speak, when read aloud because they were meant to be heard. They weren't meant to be read silently to your- self. What did you feel about the readings yesterday? Did you notice any difference between them? Between reading one and reading two, for instance? Do you think reading one came from something which was written to be read or written to be heard?

: Heard.

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S : Heard? I doubt that. It's quite a late work. It's from A~vagosha, wasn't it? It was probably written to be read, that is read to oneself, not read aloud. It certainly wasn't handed down orally. It was certainly actually composed by an author. Whereas the other, the reading from the sutta, from the 'Majjhima Nikaya', this was clearly a writing down of something which was originally meant to be learnt by heart and recited, there were repetitions. So there was a different style. If you're reading to yourself these repetitions can be quite irritating, but if you hear the same words spoken aloud, especially if they're chanted, they can be quite appropriate, like refrains in poetry or like recapitulations in music.

Like in 'The Songs of Milarepa.' S : Yes.  
It was nice hearing it.

S : It makes a very pleasant change, doesn't it, to hear something read aloud? One can be very receptive.

Punyavati : In some ~k&GI~~t countries they read Pali Sutt~, recite them as part of their devotional activity. What's the... I mean, how much effect can it have on a person?

S : You mean the person reciting or the person listening?

Punyavati : Both.

S : Very often the person reciting understands the meaning so clearly ~~~ in his case the effect will be great,'r And very often the

person listening, say in the Theravada coLAflt~I~S, listening to the  
Pali suttas being chanted, or Pali gathas being chanted, very often they  
don't understand the meaning of the words, they just have a general  
feeling, if you like, a vague feeling, that these are the  
words of the Buddha, that these are very holy words or sacred words, so  
they have very strong devotional feelings, just listening, even without  
understanding the meaning. One shouldn't underestimate that. No doubt it's  
better still if you understand the meaning, but it's by no  
means a bad thing if you are just listening to a recitation of Buddhist  
sutras with great devotion and maybe concentration, even if you've only  
got the most general sense of what it's all about.

Elsie : It ' 5 very much like us chanting the 'Last Vandana'  
towards the end. Some may not know the meaning but there's the joy of  
chanting jt

S : ""tA~f~h~e tune, the melody. You might say that listening  
with devotion to the recitation of a sutta in a language  
which you don't understand is much better, is a more positive thing to  
do, than reading the daily newspaper with any amount of  
understanding. Alright, let's go on to the next one. "It is hard to  
be born directly into Buddhist surroundings." What do you  
think this means? Being born "directly into Buddhist surroundings"?

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Carla : Where you have an opportunity of hearing the Dharma.

S : Perhaps even into a Buddhist family. Do you think it is an advantage to be born into  
a Buddhist family?

Elsie : If they are Buddhists in the true sense, not just traditional or cultural Buddhists.

S : So you could look at it this way, that people who are Buddhists also have children!  
Do you see what I mean? Do you see what I'm getting at?

- (people talking at once)

S : It shouldn't stop t'kL~~ if they want to, yes, at least that. Elsie :  
Because the Dharma is not just for the monks and the nuns

S : Well, if you have monks and nuns, that is. We're a bit short of them in this  
country.

Elsie : Even the Buddha did say in the ~i~~~v~ot~ 5utta about the duties of a  
householder, so it does mean that he doesn't teach Dharma just for the monastic order.

S : Some of my friends in the East used to put it even more strongly than that. They used to say that if the house- holders don't have children, who is going to give dana to the monks! There's that way of looking at it too!

Elsie : This is also suggested in the 'Mangala Sutta' as well. S : What is?

Elsie : ~ tiving in a conducive surrounding for the practice of Dharma.

S : Ah, yes. Right. There is the saying later on in this section "It is hard to remain unmoved by our surroundings. So it is important that you choose, if you can, or so far as you can, those surroundings which are conducive to your practice of the Dharma. So in that way it is hard to be born directly into Buddhist surroundings, though it's a very good thing if you can be. It's a very good thing if, from your earliest years, you have access to the Dharma. You won't be able to understand the Doctrine or the philosophical teaching. Maybe you won't be able to practise in a very advanced way, but you will be in touch. Do you think that has any disadvantages, though? Do you think you can become over-familiar or not value something that is around you all the time, and not realise what it is that you've got?

: Yes, there is that danger. Noel : You still need to make it your own somehow.

S : Yes, indeed you would. You couldn't just take it on from your family. That's why I sometimes say you can't, strictly speaking, be a 'born' Buddhist. You are a Buddhist by virtue of your actions; your own personal,

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S(ctd) : individual following of the Path. Not because your parents were Buddhists or are Buddhists, or your grand- parents were Buddhists.

Noel : But even if you were born into a Buddhist family and they were really practising Buddhists,, and you later left home and decided you actually didn't want (to study?), at least you had the advantage of being brought up in a very positive way.

S : Indeed, yes. This is what it would mean as far as you were concerned as a child. It wouldn't mean that you grew up with a deep conviction of the truth of the anatta doctrine! It would mean that you grew up in a happy, positive, friendly, loving atmosphere. This is what it would mean. An atmosphere of encouragement and supportiveness. And that would stand you in good stead wherever your future life took you, whatever you decided to do. And perhaps if you had been brou,g~l,~up in that way, you couldn't ever do anything~unskilful, even though you might not~~~ant to call yourself a Buddhist. It wouldn't really be possible for you, if you had been brought up in that sort of way, to get into any really unskilful way of life. At least there'd be a very big counter-influence all the time. At least that.

Punyavati : Here, is the Buddha saying that it is hard to be born directly into Buddhist surroundings? So what does that mean? We talk about things that are Buddhist, we use that term. Now that the Buddha has gone ( ) goes back to the Dharma and relating to the

teachings of the Buddha. What would that mean here then, with the Buddha saying that?

S : Presumably the Buddha is referring to a state of affairs where the Dharma, or Buddhism, is established, subsequent to his having taught it. Because the word 'hard' here is used in a slightly different sense from the way in which it's used sometimes formerly. It's hard in the sense that it's difficult. In the sense that it's a rare opportunity or it is statistically less likely that you are going to be born directly into Buddhist surroundings. None of us have been born directly into Buddhist surroundings, have we? As far as I know. I certainly wasn't.

Sulocana : I was born in a Catholic nunnery!

S : Well, you ~re~born nun, then!

Sulocana : I tried to get into it when I went to Dublin.

S : That must have been a nursing home run by nuns.

Sulocana : Yes. It was all locked up and they wouldn't let me in!

S : I was reading a very strange book recently. This is a bit off the track, but it's a little bit interesting. Reading a quite strange but interesting book about a movement, a semi-Christian - or heretical Christian movement in Poland in this century, called the (Majabites?) They had some contact with people in Holland too, for instance the old Catholics in Holland. Apparently they had a belief, or sort of teaching, that

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S(ctd) : monks and nuns should get married and in this way a new race would be brought into existence. Because their view was that children born in this way would be very special. So it started as a sort of secret movement and then it gradually leaked out that the priests and nuns were actually married and some of them were practising polygamy, some of the priests that is, and these children kept appearing in the nunnery! ( ) or anything like that, but you can see a weird kind of logic in it, can't you? But they came up against a lot of opposition, as one can imagine. Eventually they were more or less disbanded. I think there are still some (Majabite?) people in Poland, that there were a few left in the seventies, including some of the old nuns. Anyway, "It's hard to be born directly into Buddhist surroundings." But this is going to be happening. There have been some births in the Movement, haven't there? And no doubt it will be quite interesting to see how babies, how children, who are born into the Movement, so to speak, do grow up and how it affects them. And no doubt people who have children in the Movement think about this very seriously. One doesn't want to indoctrinate one's children, but certainly one would hope to create a very positive, sympathetic atmosphere which would help them in their growing up. Having perhaps in one's own case suffered from rather a lack of that sort of thing at certain stages. Has anyone got any comments, anyone who has children born directly into Buddhist surroundings, so to speak? Children maybe born after that, especially after one's own involvement with the Movement.

Carla : Mine were born before~~~I just sometimes think their lives are so totally

different from what mine was like. It just brings up so much because actually I wouldn't have minded swapping places with them.

S : Better luck next time!

Carla : But also if I tell them a little bit about what my life was like and so on, they find it quite strange to hear that we were hit in school and things like this, because they are free of any fear of t~at and they'r so.... they're actually quite happy.

S : So that suggests you weren't all that happy as a child.

Carla : Oh no. Very rigid. The usual background I think, as the rest of us. Most of us come from that, don't we?

No.

S : This wasn't exactly my experience either, though I think I'm older than anybody else, with the possible exception of Sulocana. But no, I didn't have that old-fashioned strict upbringing at all. My father didn't believe in it.

Carla : You must have chosen a good birth. S : Well, from that point of view!

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Beryl : I didn't get beaten or hit either.

S : I don't remember Ob,,e~~g beaten at all. I remember being smacked at school~when I was five or six. I don't remember what I did, probably nothing. But my mother was so angry she marched off to the school immediately and interviewed the headmistress and it never happened again.

Carla : Oh, I know?~e most striking thing is, their little friends come over to the house too and their little friends will tell you stuff as well. And I've told the children honestly what different people believe and what I believe and I'm very honest about it. One of their little friends came over and told me that his uncle had died and gone to heaven and I just simply said to him: "I'm sorry, but I don't believe in heaven," and I told him what I believed in and I said: "When you get big, you can decide." And you could see this really went in. He was only five but it really hit him.

S : Only five!

Carla : Yes, but he... but you could tell he took it in. Children are much more receptive and aware than we give them credit for.

S : And more intelligent.

I remember a lot of things like that, that happened to me when I was very young. I can

remember actually thinking3 ~d I it W~~ ~ti~ s~me person thinking as it is now.

S : Anyone else got any comments or observations?

Noel : Saffron said recently.- she's a bit older than Carla's children-occasionally she doesn't like mentioning it at school because she doesn't want everyone else at school to think that she's a Buddhist. So I've had discussions about this very thing, that you can't be born one and she's quite relieved about that! She doesn't have to commit herself.

S : She doesn't have to be one just because you are.

Noel : She understands that, but then recently she's been asking me whether you have to do certain things because you're a Buddhist, like, things to do with authority mainly. I think this is maybe to do with the stage of schooling which she is at and so I've explained: "No, nobody can order you to do anything," and I think she's finding this quite an interesting point to consider.

S : People tend to put the whole thing wrongly, don't they. They say: "If you're a Buddhist, what do you have to do?" I was often asked this when I came back to England. "You're a Buddhist, you're a Buddhist monk, what do you have to do? What rules do you have to observe?" But it isn't really anything like that at all. It's a question of; what does it mean to be a Buddhist? Not that; you are a Buddhist irrespective of what you do apparently, but that you have to do this or you have to

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S(ctd) : do that, as though the two things are quite separate. First you're a Buddhist and then, there's what you have to do or musn't do or rules that you have to observe.

Christina : Or what you're actually allowed to do.

S : Or allowed to do, yes. As I mentioned earlier on, I was asked: "Are you allowed to go out? Are you allowed to speak to people?" Or ano~~ e~ue,s tion was: "Well, who sent you to England?" I at the ti~~~ had come for me to visit England and give some lecture. The assumption was that there was some central Buddhist authority, a Buddhist pope perhaps, sending me, whether I liked it or not. No doubt if your daughter is going to an ordinary school and maybe if there's a bit of Christianity about, well, she might get this idea, that if you 're a Christian, you have to do this and if you're a Buddhist, you have to do that, but the pattern is the same. It's having to do something because you're this, that or the other.

Punyavati : I notice with my children as they're getting older now, to teenage period, that they have actually started thinking for themselves and especially about vegetarianism. They felt they would like one or two things, like sausages, and they tried it out and they felt sick for two days and they decided not to have any more. But they are actually working a lot of things out for themselves now. And the other thing I've noticed is that they can find things to inspire themselves as well from Buddhism. They like particular Bodhisattvas and in assembly they don't like doing the prayers, they use the mantra instead, so the teachers can actually see

their lips moving!

Carla . The children, Saffron, Annie and Abbey, all buried a pigeon just before we came up here and they had incense and candles and chanting. And Abbey sometimes gives me flowers that she's picked herself for my shrine which is really lovely, and cards and things which they make, they give them to me for my shrine. They want to.

S : I remember in Vangisa's case, you may know that he had two sons, and I remember when the second of them was very small, three or four, he insisted on having his own little shrine which he set up in his room and he had it for years, he might even still have it (he's a teenager now) but he'd sit there in the morning just like his father did at his shrine, and say he was meditating, or he'd do a sort of puja, but he did it. Just because his father was doing it. Not that he was ~u5t copying the father in a negative sort of sense ~4C1t was natural that he wanted to do as his father did, and be like his father because he was very fond of his father.

Punyavati : Actually sometimes by emulating you can develop this.

S : Yes. ~e)mulation rather than image. You're learning by copying, so to speak.

Punyavati : A~y~ way, that is how children do learn a lot of things, by emulating the adults.

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S : Yes, right. Which means they have to spend some time with the adults, have to be around them, which isn't perhaps the contemporary trend.

Punyavati . That's pr0bably~~he most skilful way of setting an example, not actually~ disciplining them.

Carla . And yesterday we had our first entertainment for children and our first cr~che at a major festival at the London Buddhist Centre, which was really, we were thinking about this yesterday, those of us from London, how important that was to us to get that started.

Punyavati : I've noticed there is some difference in the three babies born in the Movement so far. That they're less restless, and I think it's got a lot to do with their mother's attitudes towards them. They don't give them so much attention, too much attention. They seem to be. . . I find it difficult to explain if I talk to them about it... I thought there was something more integrated in them. They almost seem like concentrating at times, as often babies don't tend to focus very well, but they seem much more composed and integrated than most babies are.

S . Well, clearly the mental state of the mother will influence, well, the mother especially, I mean the father too, but mother



more particularly with the younger ones, will affect the baby v~ry

Punyavati : And generally they seem more contented as well.

S : So, supposing the mother is meditating. This must have an effect on the b~by. If the mother is meditating during pregnancy, this must have an effect on the baby.

Marlene : I found that when I was pregnant. I used to find that, usually, if you were sitting down, not doing anything, that's exactly the time you would feel the baby moving around. But if I was meditating, everything went quiet. I didn't believe it to begin with, but it went on for a few months, so I think it was probably this.

S : I think it is recognised that there is this rapport emotionally between the little baby and the mother even before b~t) or O~t~Pe~S most of all before birth. So it seems quite natural that the mother's mental state should ~ffect the baby, and that if the mother is meditating, the baby should be meditating too, in a way. It's quite a thought. If the mother is of a meditative disposition or has meditated a lot, well, no doubt the baby, when it is born, will be better tempered and (I don't know whether you can report that) - better tempered and more placid generally.

Marlene : I haven't got anything to compare her with.

S : You can't really say what she would have been like otherwise.

Marlene : But it was interesting what you were saying about the young boy having, wanting to have, his own shrine, because when Marie, or till recently she has~~~ been, I meditate in the attic, and that's where the shrine is, and she

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Marlene(ctd) : hasn't been up there, but she's now /e~r~ned to climb the ladder and she went up and she was really fascinated by it. And she didn't want to go and disturb it, she actually wanted to be around it, not to pick things up. She refers to the rupa now as the 'Buddhi man!

Carla : Mine call Nagabodhi, Nagabogie!

S : This also suggests that if you know you're going to have a child you should prepare for it in this sort of way too. You should get yourself into a relaxed, meditative sort of frame of mind and in that way give the baby the best possible start. What better start could you give than that? Anyway, let's just do... oh no, ~e~ re over time. Let's close on that note then, a nice, positive note. Well, I think it's positive.

(end of tape)

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: "It is hard to bear lust and desire (without yielding to them)."

This, in a general way, has reference, one may say, to the sort of situation that we find occurring as between the last nidana of the result process of this life and the first nidana of the cause process of this life. Do you see what I'm getting at? That is to say, in dependence upon - what is it? - 'vedana' there arises craving 'trsna', 'tanha'. This is really what this saying is all about. Or maybe not quite, maybe we should go a bit further along the line, in dependence upon the 'trsna' or craving arises. ...?

: Grasping.

S : Grasping, 'upadana'. You see? So perhaps it's more like... it's very difficult to experience 'trsna', craving, without allowing that to result in actual grasping. Supposing you see a chocolate. You see the chocolate, that is 'vedana', I suppose, especially if you put it into your mouth and taste it. But even though you enjoy the taste that is still only 'vedana'. You see? Just the bare enjoyment of that sweet is still just 'vedana', pleasurable sensation. That is still a resultant. No karma is being produced, either skilful or unskilful. But if, as you roll that chocolate around in your mouth, craving develops, based upon that sweet agreeable flavour and general sort of comfortable sucking sensation, well then, that craving, that 'trsna', that thirst, is a volition, you've started up something. That's a karma, unskilful no doubt; and then if in dependence upon that 'upadana' arises, that is to say, you stretch out your hand to the box and you take another and another and another, well then, that is grasping. So one can see, therefore, if one looks at it in these terms, it is hard to bear lust and desire without yielding to them. ~]~fl~ in the first place, it's hard to experience the pleasurable sensation without allowing it to give rise to craving, and it's still more difficult actually to feel the craving without allowing it to give rise to grasping, to attachment and ~0~Qfl. ~~~ So this verse is sugges~~~wa~~c~Sm%~n very mindful in such situations, that we attend to the process, we see what is happening.

: That reminds me of something you said a couple of days ago, about avoiding situations that make you crave something.

S : Which make you crave something? Yes.

: I think we were talking about leading a simple life.

S : Yes. Well, clearly if you are prone to craving, if you are susceptible to craving, you should be careful about placing yourself in the kind of situation which is highly likely to give rise to that particular kind of craving anyway.

Punyavati : I suppose taking a vow would be a way of actually experiencing the pleasurable sensation, or even craving, but not actually grasping for it.

S : Taking a vow in what way?

Punyavati : Abstaining from something which one desires.

S : Yes, taking a vow certainly sort of helps you develop a positive habit. I mean, I cited this example from my own experience recently down in London in a study group. I remember, for instance, that when I was in India for many years I observed the rule not to take solid food after mid-day. In other words, that's a vow, so to speak, that one takes. So I found that if I had people staying with me and they were eating in the evening, I could sit with them and have my cup of

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S(CTD) : tea while they were tucking into their rice and dhal or whatever it was. I didn't even feel like eating. It didn't occur to me because I was so accustomed to not eating and I had become accustomed to it to begin with because of taking that particular precept or taking that particular vow. It might, of course, be a bit difficult to do that if, at the very time that you're taking it or when you've very recently taken it, everybody is eating in the evening. This occurred when I'd been observing that vow for many years. So perhaps it's not a bad idea, if one does take a vow of this kind, say to abstain from chocolates or whatever, you take it on a retreat where the circumstances are very favourable for getting established in your vow, so that by the time you go back into ordinary life the vow is already beginning to be a habit and you find it easy to continue when you're back in the old surroundings.

Va~ragita? : I don't always find it easy to change ( ) because when the situation ( ) you start going back to your old habits.

S : But if you've already established a positive habit, it's more easy~to continue when you're back in the old surroundings rather than to actually begin observing a vow in those old surroundings. Do you see what I mean?

: I find that on retreats I don't really need to take a vow because by just not doing all the things I am normally doing, like indulging in sense desires, also cravings, I am able to see all those things more clearly and when I do go back there's less desire to get back into the old ways of living. Especially like at Vajraloka because the life is so simple there and there is a lot of meditation.

S : Almost austere. : Yes.

S : How many of you have been to Vajraloka? Oh, quite a few. That's good. There's going to be a women's month, isn't there, shortly? June. Almost the best time of the year with all the bluebells out. I think it's bluebells at that time of year, isn't it? Yes, I remember them~Vcr~~c11. So, "It is hard to bear lust and desire(without yielding to them).M It's very difficult being right next to the object, having it right in front of you, in contact with you, maybe you're even en~oying it. Then it's very difficult under those circumstances not to yield to craving and clinging. So a beginner, at least, needs to be very careful what circumstances they put themselves into. And even if it is difficult to change your ordinary pattern of life, at least go away on retreat from time to time. Have a solitary retreat, meditation retreat, study retreat, whatever. The next one is akTh to t "It is hard to see something attractive without desiring it." Well, attractive and desirable, they are almost the same thing. If you see something as desirable, you will desire it. The fact that you 've seen it as desirable means that you've already started desiring it. If you see it as attractive, it means you~~e already been attracted.

: Would a sense of appreciation come in here in ( ) terms, rather than desiring something, because something is beautiful or attractive ( ) a sense of being appreciative or try to ( )?

S : I think you can. I think though sometimes, the truly beautiful, if c~a can use that expression, and the desirable are sometimes very much mixed up, as in art. I mean there might be a painting of a beautiful

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S(ctd) : figure and that figure may be truly beautiful, but at the same time the element of desirability may be there, at least so far as the observer is concerned.

What do you mean exactly by desirability?

S : Well, an element which is likely to give rise to craving. A sort of wish to possess that object, not just to admire the painting.

Stephanie : If you see an art (object?) or a relatively abstract form, you start to appreciate the quality rather thanW&~rI1~ thing. I think that's where devotion comes in, because you start to appreciate abstract qualities or archetypal qualities, rather than some concrete thing which is a lot more common to you. Because I feel if I look at a painting or say a beautiful poem, or something like that, it doesn't make me feel I want to own that thing or possess that thing. It makes me feel that life has got that (beauty?).

S : Yes, well, what I'm saying is that in the case of some paintings, for instance, it might be possible to see it as beautiful, truly beautiful, but, depending on the nature of what is represented, it might also be possible to see it in such a way that craving was stimulated. Sometimes the borderline is very difficult to draw.

: ( ) beautiful flower ( )

S : Wanting to pick it Yes. Instead of just letting it grow. Even seeing the apple

hanging on the tree. But no doubt it does help to develop or try to develop this more, as it were, aesthetic attitude towards life, this appreciative attitude towards life, rather than the attitude based upon desire and craving. Just look at things and enjoy them for their own sake without wanting to appropriate them or grab them.

Marlene : I think it's easier to do that when looking at things in nature.

S : I think so. Probably. Yes. Because there is an example of, one could say, beauty which is restful, which doesn't provoke desires. That you can just contemplate, that you can enjoy, in a perfectly skilful way, in a perfectly positive way.

Sulocana : Perhaps - seeing things, some things, would always be working on one's conditioning, because if one's actually tasting or appreciating it, the desire wouldn't arise. I mean, quite often it's a lack of appreciating that thing that one wants to have it. I mean you can't enjoy it.

S : I would say, if there's a strong element of, so to speak, aesthetic appreciation in your life, I would say that desire in the sense of craving is less likely to arise. Do you see what I mean? If you're starved, in the sense of being deprived of aesthetic relish, as it's called in India *rishas* - you are more likely to start craving almost by way of compensation.

: Filling the gaps.

S : Yes. Filling the gaps.

Marlene : Is that because you're then creating an attitude within yourself so that you don't need to look for objects?

S : No. I think it's connected with the question of pleasure. It does seem that pleasure is essential to the healthy living organism. It's

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S(ctd) : as though you can't live without pleasure. But when you enjoy a work of art or when you enjoy nature, when you have that sort of aesthetic experience, that sort of aesthetic enjoyment, then the pleasure is skilful, the pleasure is wholesome, it's positive, it's not contaminated by an element of craving. So since your need for pleasure, one might say, is satisfied in a positive, healthy, skilful way, there's less likelihood of your hankering after pleasure in an unskilful way, that is to say, by way of craving. Do you see what I mean? I think it's important to recognise that human beings can't live without pleasure. It might sound rather odd putting it in that way. I hope it doesn't sound too odd. But by pleasure I don't mean of course ~ wild round of parties or rock music or anything like that. That, if anything, is rather painful. But you know what I mean? Even in terms of physical pleasure you can't really thrive without a bit of sunshine and all the rest of it. So if you have a sort of aesthetic appreciation of things, well, that gives you pleasure in quite a positive and skilful way. To the extent that you enjoy that, or you enjoy things in that aesthetic way, I think you'll be less likely to crave for pleasure or to cling.

Trish? : How would you distinguish between happiness and pleasure?

S : Happiness is more of an emotion. Pleasure is more like a sensation. When you enjoy the sunshine, that is pleasure. When you enjoy your meditation, that is happiness. When you enjoy studying the Dharma, that is happiness. But I'm speaking specifically, or have been speaking specifically, of pleasure. So long as you are an embodied being, you'll see you cannot thrive without pleasure. But you can get pleasure in so many ways and clearly one should try to get it in a skilful rather than an unskilful way. And aesthetic pleasure, or aesthetic relish, is skilful, because in a way it's disinterested, it doesn't involve an element of craving. So it's hard to see something attractive without desiring it, especially when there's a paucity of positive skilful pleasure in your life, one might say. Well, I think this is one of the reasons why people feel happier in the country, because there's more pleasure. You have pleasure just going for a walk, just going out into the garden, looking at the trees, feeling the sunshine, hearing the birds. This is all pure pleasure. So since you're enjoying that pleasure, your craving is diminished. When you're in the city and you're less in contact with nature, there's less of that sort of pleasure and your craving will increase. Quite a few people report this. I think it is due just to these basic, simple reasons to a great extent. There is less of, as it were, healthy satisfaction in the city, so you start craving for relatively unhealthy satisfaction.

: Maybe you even try to make up for the lack of satisfaction by going out and looking for it.

: Yes.

Carla : That's why going on retreat, I think, regularly is terribly important too because I know if I've got something even in a couple of months to look forward to, I know I'm going to Vajraloka, that'll tide me over without craving for two months. That sort of thing. That's why I think it's very important to try and make it as regular as possible, not just one month here~ I mean, even if you have to break it up so that you know you've got that. I mean, you do look forward to it, mean, crave~ sometimes but still it's more positive.

S : Right. And also it does suggest that it's the right sort of thing for

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S(ctd) : retreat centres to be in the country.

Carla : Yes, very much so.

S : Because they're surrounded with that element of positive skilful enjoyment.

Stephanie : Also, about going on a retreat, I find that when I go away on retreat, I don't want the things that I want in London. I don't miss them, so that when I come back I know that those wishes, they're not really something that I need or something that's important, they're just things that I need because of the way I'm operating at the time.

S : Like when you're on retreat, say, you don't think, or I hope you don't think, of

going to see a film or anything like that. Whereas in London, if you haven't got anything particular to do, well, that's one of the first things you think of. Not of going and doing some extra meditation or anything like that, but of going and seeing a film, or going out for the evening or something of that kind. One can, of course, get intense pleasure, happiness, enjoyment, from meditation, but in the city, perhaps because of one's whole way of life, it's difficult, sometimes at least, really to see that.

Eve : It's partly due to all the distractions. There's so much that you can do.

S : Well, there's so much that you could miss! People have this sort of not wanting to miss anything and this can be very disturbing and upsetting. It's one of the quite interesting and quite good things about India. There's so many things there you don't know that you're missing. You don't know what films you're missing or concerts you're missing or anything. No, you just don't know anything about those things. ~ "It is hard to see something attractive without desiring it." And in the same way, "It is hard to bear insult without being angry." Here you're dealing with a different kind of negative emotion. It's very easy just to retort. It's not even a question of insult, but someone just saying something that you don't quite like or don't agree with. It may not make you angry, but it may at least irritate you or exasperate you.

Carla : Perhaps the most difficult thing to deal with is honest criticism because that's painful because it hurts.

S : Yes. Of course, no doubt this is a rather subjective matter because what one person regards as an insult, another might regard as a compliment. It might be an insult to you. Then the Buddha says: "It is hard to have power and not to pay regard to it. This is not unlike the third ~~~t~n~~3 "It is hard to study the Way when occupying a position of great authority." So, "It is hard to have power and not to pay regard to it." What does it mean, do you think, "not to pay regard to it~t?

: Not to let it affect your behaviour.

eJ

S : Not to let it ~ffect your behaviour. Not to use it or~tempt~ to use it.

To abuse it.

S : To abuse it, yes, or to pride yourself on it. Not to be very conscious

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S(ctd) : that you have it. So, I mean, this suggests that if you have power, it's almost impossible not to use it whatever the situation, whatever the circumstances

: Everyone has power over certain thin~~ in their lives, don't they? You don't have to be the ruler of a country to experience it. You can have the power to make someone happy or not.

: Right. I think though, 'power' is being used here in the sense~~which,, in English, or at least in the Friends, we contrast power with love, the power mode with the love mode. We could paraphrase it by saying it's hard to possess authority and not to be conscious of it.

Eve : Do you mean self-consciousness or do you mean just consciousness?

S : No. Consciousness. Conscious that you have the power. It's hard to forget that you have the power. It's hard to act or behave as though you didn't have it. You can't even put the power aside in those situations perhaps where it isn't appropriate to exercise it. I spoke about this quite a bit in India to some of our Indian Friends. Because in India there's one sort of rather unfortunate practice they have, that you carry your official position over into social life. In India, official position is very important, official position meaning, usually, government service. I mean, for instance, someone might be working on the railways and he might be a quite high-ranking official in the railways, but even when he's not actually on duty, he carries his position around with him. If he goes to, say, a social function, he's given special treatment because of his position in the railway. He doesn't go, so to speak, just as an ordinary member of the public, even though his position in the railways has no relevance whatsoever to that particular situation. He's never considered apart from his official position and this has created some difficulties for us, for our own work, for our own Movement, because there are some people with whom we are in contact who have high positions, say, in government service, and who expect that therefore they will automatically be given a high position in the FWBO; they will carry over their high official position into the FWBO and I've had to explain that, well, we don't do things in this way and that even in England, in ordinary social life, that just doesn't happen. It's very difficult for people to understand. For instance, it used to happen that if we organised a meeting and we had the chairman of the meeting and speakers up on the platform, if a prominent official attended the meeting, he could expect to be seated on the platform, even though he knew nothing whatever about Buddhism, just because of his official position. It's not true. And this is a quite minor officials, even to someone maybe with a degree, I mean, attending a meeting in a village, he'd expect very special treatment on account of his degree. Or the fact that he was the headmaster of the local school or something like that. Or the chief clerk in the magistrates' office. Do you see what I mean? I mean authority, power, is carried around with one in that sort of way and people even expect to carry it with them into the purely Buddhist situation and they expect it to count there. I mean, one of our Friends couldn't understand why he wasn't immediately welcomed into the Order because he was, in fact, a high-ranking official in government and wanting to help us. He just couldn't understand it.

Stephanie : This isn't actually power, is it, this kind of thing? It's more status. S : That's true.

Stephanie : I mean, true power is quite different, isn't it?

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S : Yes. But there is the fact that in India people who have status have power. That is to say, status in the sense of position in the government. Some of these Friends of ours very definitely had power.



Stephanie : But they didn't have power in the sense that was relevant. For example, if somebody comes to a meeting they know nothing about, they have no power within that meeting. They have no power, for example, to make a speech or say...

S : Yes, they consider that they have and sometimes they insist on exercising that power which they think they have. They might be very annoyed if we didn't allow them to speak, even though they know nothing of the subject.

Stephanie : But if they really did have power, then you would allow them to speak because that would mean they would be able to contribute something.

S : Oh, yes. The fact that they also to have an official position wouldn't affect them being allowed to give a lecture on Buddhism if they had the qualification to do that. It's simply that their official position is just irrelevant, but they don't think that--other people don't think it. I mean, if they have some sort of official position or even position in society, even just wealth, they expect that they'll be given a special position in the Buddhist movement in this case, and given time to speak from the platform, even though they know nothing about Buddhism. So, in the sense that people generally accept this, in that sense they do even actually have power because other people will say, 'why don't you let them speak?', 'why don't you let him speak?') You know ~he is the deputy magistrate, or he is the assistant collector of taxes. Why don't you let him speak? He's a big man.' A big man must be given the opportunity to speak. That's how they see it.

Stephanie : Yes, I was just thinking it's a different type of power.

S : You're right that in, as it were, sociological terms, status is a different category, so to speak. But it's as though in India, all these are intertwined. If you have status, well, you have authority--and if you have authority or if you have either or both, you actually do have power over other people. This seems really rather odd.

Elsie : I think it's quite common in the East actually, even in Malaysia. It's like, even though you don't know that particular person, if there's some sort of function you're expected to ...

S : To give them a prominent place, even though, you know, they don't have any real connection with what is going on.

Elsie : Yes.

: H~e ~ny of these people who came along who ha~ reasonably high position~ a'i~ ~LcL~Ls~ -

S . Quite a few of them now. tA~ : Have they been ordained? Have they stuck ~t their involvement and been ordained? I'm just curious.

S : There are a few who have got a slightly high position, that is to say, one who is a

professor in a college, which is regarded as quite a good position. He enjoys a definite status. There's one such person been ordained, but no one with a very high position, though we have some

good Friends ~&A~'c,,~and some of them are quite understanding in this

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S(ctd) : respect, but not all by any means.

: Bhante, perhaps it works subconsciously here as well, because if you are in a position of power, you are used to things going your way. You'll develop a fair amount of self-confidence which would carry over into your handling of situations.

S : Yes, well, if you've got a general self-confidence one Can use it in any situation. You've just got to be quite sure whether that comes from your own being or whether it's jus~~carr~q over from your position of one kind or another.

: Would personal charisma also be a sort of power that you have over. ...?

S : Well, what is charisma? It's a sort of bewitchment, isn't it? I would say charisma, as usually understood and exercised, is a form of power. In other words, people take advantage of you by exercising their charisma. They dazzle you with their pseudo-spiritual brilliance so you can't see what they're up to or what's going on, what they're letting you in for. It's quite interesting, in some schools of Buddhism, there is a sort of rule, if one can call it that, that the monk, when he delivers a talk on the Dharma, holds up a fan in front of his face. The reason is that you should not give any attention to purely personal considerations. He may be a very young, handsome monk, with a beautiful dazzling smile, you should not pay any attention to that. You should just hear this impersonal voice coming from behind the fan, expounding the Dharma! Well, t~at ~~~snund a bit extreme, but there is something in it because sometimes people are impressed by mere personality; that the speaker is young or handsome or attractive or has a good presence or that she is pretty or well-spoken or whatever it may be.

: But even that may be better than no interest at all if the person was prepared to use it skilfully.

S : Well, yes. If they're prepared to use it skilfully, that's the big question. That you don't just use it to exploit people. I sometimes say: "Beware of the man with charisma." Or woman for that matter. So: "It is hard to have power and not to pay regard to it."

Vajragita : Can you get rid of power? You say power is not to use it, but can you sort of get rid of that?

S : I don't think that any member of the group as such can ever be entirely devoid of power. To be a group member means to possess power. I don't think you can abdicate power completely. I don't think having power is necessarily a bad thing. I mean, we use the word alVri~~ as though it were a dirty word, but this is not necessarily so. To be a member of the group is to have power, because if group members didn't have power then the group can't function. This is what the group functions on. But power must be exercised reasonably resp~ibly. If you're a parent, you have power over your children.

Punyavati? : If you change from the power mode to the love mode, does it mean that it ceases to be power then?

S : What does one mean by changing? You operate in a different way. Instead of trying to force somebody, you try to persuade them. Well, maybe you can say that is the whole art of bringing up children. I hope I'm not sort of treading, rushing in where angels fear to tread! Angels

being mothers of course!

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S(ctd) But as a parent you have absolute power over the child, don't you, really? Especially when it's small. So you control it through power because in the last resort you can force it to do what you want it to do or you can stop it from doing what it wants to do and you don't want it to do. Power is with you. But it's as though the whole art of bringing up a child means to ~~~~tt~t~ the love mode ~or the power mode so that eventually you can... you don't have to sort of stop the child doing something by force, you can explain to the child why it shouldn't do that and it doesn't do it. Do you see what I mean? But I think, yes, in the beginning you'd be irresponsible if you didn't exercise power.

Sulocana : A child has tremendous power by being so helpless.

S : That's blackmail!

Sulocana : No, it's real need and you have to...

S : No, I think that's using the word 'power' in another sense. The child doesn't have power, it's the way that you see the child. You see the child's helplessness and~eel obliged to behave in a certain way, which means in a sense, metaphorically, yes, the child has power over you. But that's because you regard the child in a certain way. If you didn't have a particular feeling towards the child, well, it wouldn't, as it were, have that power over you.

Stephanie : That's true of more than one type of power, isn't it? It's true of the government official too, to some extent, once he's out of his normal setting.

S : Yes. Actually he has no power over you. you choose to give him that power. This is what some of our Friends in India just don't see. They really think he's still got the power. Of course, in some ways he has, because many people in official positions can, as it were, quite illegitimately exercise their power outside their strict circle. For instance, if they take a dislike to you and you're working in government service in some other department, they can talk to some friend of theirs, some opposite number of the same grade as themselves in your department, and get you dismissed. They can exercise power illegitimately in that sort of way.

Stephanie : Ultimately, even that power has been given to them, hasn't it? Because power.. people delegate power and create bureaucracies and governments and so on. It takes a bit longer to dismantle them.

S : Yes. A still more powerful person could intervene and put a stop to that.

(end of side one)

S : .... through a friend of a friend, so pressure is now being brought to bear. This is power we are exercising. We are not operating in a love mode, not immediately anyway. We're bringing the power mode to bear. But this is the way things are done. You can exercise power skilfully as well as unskilfully. I mean, in India life can be very complicated. Quite interesting. In some places you can hardly buy a stamp from the Post Office without exercising influence. Even a simple thing like going to a bank and cashing traveller~~cheque~ if you've got friends and can exert influence it's done more quickly. It's as simple as that. I mean, in India an influential person is one who, unconsciously even, without even having to take thought, exercises influence, gets things done, just by virtue of being what he is. Sometimes it's enough even just to have the reputation

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S(ctd) : of influence to get things done, ~~~ometimes, in the long run, your bluff is called. But the dynamics of power can be a quite interesting study. So: "It is hard to have power and not to pay regard to it." "It is hard to come into contact with things and yet remain unaffected by them." This is almost a truism, isn't it? You are affected almost always by the things you come into contact with, whether people, books, activities of various kinds, your work. So you should be very careful what you allow yourself to come into contact with. It seems to be obvious, doesn't it? You shouldn't allow yourself to come into contact with things~you don't want to be affected by.

It means remaining very mindful.

S : Yes.

Trish : There could be a danger in that, though, because you could be not facing

something rather than... well, I can't think of an example. You're not facing something about yourself. You're just putting it away, rather than perhaps looking at it and sorting it out.

S : But this suggests, in a way, that you do understand yourself, in the sense that you know you will be affected in an unskilful way by certain things. You understand this, you're aware of it. Therefore, with awareness, you avoid those things.

Carla : I find, in that sense, there's certain things I no longer talk about and if a conversation approaches them, I simply leave the room.

S : Ah, yes. Right.

Carla : Extraneous help because certain things do have quite an effect on me.

S : Conversation is also a form of contact.

Punyavati : Most of the time it is very difficult to know how much all these things do have an effect on us. We just sort of take them for granted.

S : Perhaps you don't notice some of the effects they are having. I'm sure this is the case with a lot of people in connection with their work, their daily work. They don't really know the sort of effect it's having on them. They don't even think in those terms, perhaps.

:( ) totally absorbed in one's lifestyle. You need to be able to step outside.

S : Again this points to the desirability and usefulness of things like retreats, when you withdraw for a short while from the existing situation, including your job.

That's really true of a solitary retreat, and when you come back... from a solitary retreat, you notice the effect. S : You just find yourself obstructed incapable of operating in the old way.

Eve : I think this has quite a strong effect on people working in a moral and ethical situation as well. I was thinking of the co-ops. Quite often we aren't aware of how much of an effect it does have on people

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Eve(ctd) : starting in the businesses. That, in fact, they're putting themselves in an excellent position because what they are doing is ethically skilful.

S : Yes. It works both ways. It works with regard to the unskilful and also with regard to the skilful.

: Yesterday, at the end, you mentioned that it is easy to become familiar with a situation so that we don't actually realise what it is in a situation that makes us feel good, and the sort of question going through my mind is that if we set up conditions, people still have to

be able to connect themselves with what it is. You can sort of set up, almost hand it on a plate, and then it's no good either, because ~t~ 5 not fulfilling the function.

S : Yes, indeed. Well, it's fulfilling its function only if people actually make use of it. I mean, in the old days, we used to see people going on retreat and just wasting their opportunities in not attending the meditation sessions or just wasting their time, even though they were technically on retreat. This is what you used to see years ago.

Ter~sa : It's a bit like that with a centre. Particularly one so well-built and beautiful as the LBC. People go in and somehow they don't connect with the fact that people did a ~ot of work in order to make it like that. It's somehow... so there it's sort of taken for granted.

S : Well, that's a somewhat different thing, that you take for granted a facility that has been laid on. That's rather different from your sort of not making use, or not understanding, that you have to make use of the facility for it to be of any value. And you could put this in very positive terms. It's hard to come into contact with the Dharma and yet remain unaffected by it. So, for ~aven~s sake, put yourself in contact with the Dharma as soon as possible so you can be affected, changed quickly, transformed, in fact! And then the Buddha says: "It is hard to study widely and investigate everything thoroughly." Well, this applies to every branch of knowledge, especially nowadays. It's said that it was possible formerly for one man to grasp the whole of knowledge, whatever was kno~~ at his particular time. You do get, you did ~ apparentl~lt~ch e ce tional people, well-versed in all the g~ology, L~~je~piflogJopyt;~~e0 ~?~ny, the history, the geography, etc. of their day. They had(read all the books on all these subjects. There were only a few hundred of them altogether. Now no one person could possibly do that. If you take some of the more advanced scientific subjects - what about biology? %J-ell, there's so many different branches of biology and you can't master all of them. I gather even marine biology is a lifetime's study, even just to study a few species of fish is a lifetime's study, to know all about those fish. So it ' 5 very difficult. It's very hard to study widely and~"~~sttgotc ever~thing thoroughly. At the same time you have to make up your mind about certain things. Circumstances sometimes require you to do that. I think we mentioned yesterday about having to make up your mind about all sorts of complicated econom~ questions. But how can you? You don't have the time to go into things. No use relying on the experts. They very often disagree. And how are you to know who are the experts? You'd have to study the subject quite thoroughly before you c~l~ even understand who had a right to speak on the subject. So, yes, indeed: "It is hard to study widely and investigate every- thing thoroughly." This certainly applies to the Dharma. You've got all those Pali suttas.

S of 42 5 D4 Tl 12 (43 'you'v~ 9ot alt tk~ ~~~~~ni S~ra£. S(ctd) :  
You've got the Vinaya literature, the Abhidharma works. ~ You've got all those Tantras, many of them untranslated; the Shastras, all the philosophical works written by the great Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan Buddhist teachers. You've got all the works written on Buddhism in English, German, French, Italian and ~ Russian~ a~fso on. And, I mean, it's not enough just to read about Buddhism. In order to understand the subject thoroughly, you've got to read about ancient Indian history and culture. Languages. Well, if you want really to know all these things thoroughly, you have to learn the original languages, anyway: Pali, Sanskrit, Chinese, Tibetan, Japanese, Mongolian; ~ Thai, Burmese and Sinhalese too, probably. So, it's as though a really wide knowledge and a deep knowledge of almost any subject is practically

impossible. So where does that lead to?

Eve : You investiate fully the things that you are interested in, just concentratin~ on them.

Trish : But you can't even do that. I mean, assuming a basic general knowledge of, say, let's take Buddhism; assuming you know a little bit about the basic stuff, would you advise, would it be better to work really hard on a couple of things or to perhaps range more thinly?

S : Well, the question really is of knowledge. What is knowledge? The kind of knowledge, the type of knowledge I've been speaking - so far as though knowledge meant scientific knowledge. But does it? Does it? Do you really develop knowledge, at least from a spiritual point of view, by just acquainting yourself with facts, as it were empirically, and generalising from those? Drawing general conclusions in a sort of scientific way? Is that the way that you study Buddhism at least? Is it really so? If not, well, how do you do it?

~No, that's not really the answer.

Vajragita : What you need to develop. What you need for yourself, to be able to develop.

S : Yes, but even that implies some study.

Punyavati : Understanding.

Elsie : Yes. You've got to sort of experiment with that. Whether it works for you.

Stephanie : Well, you've still got to study.

S : Which is the right practice or the best practice or what practices there are. It could be that the practice which is really suited to you is in some very obscure sutra which one has translated yet! Or even in one that has been lost! ( ). I think actually that the approach has been entirely the wrong way round. I mean, knowledge from the spiritual point of view is not something to be developed by the study of facts, religious facts. What you need to do is to develop a sort of, what I can only describe as a visionary faculty within yourself. That is what you really need to do. The rest is irrelevant except in so far as it helps you to do that.

Sulocana : Perhaps the book is written after the teaching was given to the pupil. As an account of that.

S : Very often it is. Very often it is. As a sort of aide-memoire: 'This is what you were taught'.

Stephanie : How would you develop a visionary faculty? Teresa : What do you mean by a visionary faculty? Stephanie : Which of our practices would help that?

S : That's quite a question. Maybe we should go a little bit more first into the question of the necessity of developing that visionary faculty. As I said, it's a question of the nature of knowledge. You don't really come to know about Buddhism or to know about spiritual things by studying Buddhism like you would any other subject and accumulating information about it and trying to generalise from that. Before you can really study Buddhism you need, as it were, the organ with which to study it and that's what I've called the visionary faculty. If you've got that, then everything else will fall into place. So how do you develop that, really? Because this is what you really ought to be doing. Well, one of the main ways, of course, is through meditation. But even that isn't really much of an answer, because what do you mean by meditation? Or even which meditation? But broadly speaking, so far as our own tradition, so to speak, is concerned, well, ~ot£ start off with the Mindfulness and the Metta. And you do, perhaps, the five or six element practice. And eventually you are given the mantra with the corresponding visualisation. And the Buddha or the Bodhisattva figure which you visualise, which you meditate on, so to speak, represents, at least from one point of view, not just something outside yourself, but you, yourself, at a higher or, if you like, deeper, level of existence. When you are in touch with that you are in touch with yourself in a much deeper and truer sense and you are, as it were, identified with that. You've become that. That becomes you. It's not just an object out there. And you start, as it were, seeing things through the eyes, you might say, of that Bodhisattva. And that is when, yes, you have spiritual vision. That's the knowledge- the real knowledge is the knowledge that you get looking at things with that spiritual vision1 and you won't get that by studying any number of books. Yes, books may help, to the extent that they are inspiring. But knowledge about Buddhism doesn't mean generalisation derived from ~actual information about Buddhism. Do you see what I mean?

Noel : To a lesser extent then, does spiritual knowledge depend upon being in touch with your intuitive faculty?

this is S : One could say that. I mean, the intuitive faculty rather loose sort of term- ~ut being roughly a sort of being-perhaps ~ a insight, one might say, not using intuition quite in the lower form of everyday sense, as when you speak, say, of a woman's intuition ordinary something of that sort. But intuition in the sense of a more direct or sort of understanding of things, which is more akin to direct sight, which bypasses logical processes. This is the basic characteristic of intuition. You know something\*sd your knowledge is valid, but you haven't gone through any logical process, any process of reasoning, to come to that conclusion. Women are said to be especially good at that. Whether or not that is so, I am not saying.

But there is such a thing as intuition~ and ~nsight, meaning that of Buddhism, is much more akin to this sort of intuition. It's direct, it's immediate, it doesn't go through any logical process. There is not a conclusion that you draw from premises.

Carla : Bhante, you mentioned the five or six element practice. Is it



appropriate  
given  
what  
five

to do such a practice without asking you first? I know we're  
the Metta Bhavana and Mindfulness of Breathing. How can we know  
practices we should do or should we just do those two and drop the  
or six element practice?

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S : Well, I certainly suggest that people should concentrate on the  
Mindfulness and Metta Bhavana and not neglect those or not be in a  
hurry to move on from those. But I certainly think that at least those  
who are mitras can do the five element practice, that is to say, the  
visualisation of the stupa; can certainly do that and I believe some  
have done it on a retreat. That's a sort of introduction to the  
visualisation of the bodhisattva. At least you get, so to speak, practice  
with visualisation. Some of you might have done this?

Carla : I was told to stop until I'd asked you.

S : No, that is alright. That at ~east mitras should.... I mean, I just  
want to discourage in people, whether Order Members or non-Order Members,  
any tendency to h~er after a new practice or more advanced practice  
before one has really established oneself in what one is already  
supposed to be doing. Just that.

: What about the prostration practice?

S : I'm afraid I've had rather unfortunate experience with the prostration  
practice, even so far as Order Members are concerned. I mean, a lot  
of people have taken it up, but~not kept it up, and that's really v4ty  
disappointing. So I'm quite cautious now. I have said I don't think  
anybody should take ~t up without consulting me first and now I  
usually say, give it a month's trial, or give yourself a month's trial~  
and see whether you get on with it, whether you like it, so to speak.  
And at the end of the month, then decide whether you are going to  
stop there, satisfied with that month's experience, or whether you are going  
to carry on doing it regularly. If you are going to do it regularly, then  
you must really commit yourself to doing it.

: Would you say once a week was sufficiently often? S : I'm  
thinking in terms of every day. : Every day?

S : Yes. But give yourself a month's trial. You might really want to do  
it every day after a month.

: So, it's the same as with our basic meditation practice.

S : Yes, in a way. Anyway: "It is hard to study  
widely and investigate everything thoroughly." I mean, if you have to

study all the Buddhist literature, all the sutras, before you can really start practising Buddhism, ~OtA~rt de~~teA be ore you e'6~~ begin... but fortunately that is not the way to g ~ at is not the sort of knowledge that we are after. At best that is ~ust supportive, just helpful, a bit of that kn~ledge, in a secondary sort of way. There is one story which illustrates this about an old monk, who, I think, was illiterate. A~ttia(Iy~ he'd become an Arahant, but he wasn't very highly regarded by the people because he wasn't Ver~ educated~~~~ think~ not even literate. Other monks didn't take him seriously. But anyway, one day it had come to light that he was an Arahant, so people started asking him questions about the Abhidharma and he'd never even heard of the Abidharma, but actually alVhough he'd never ven heard of it, he recited all seven books of the AbhidharWm0~a~~ra~ t off! This is a rather literalistic sort of story, but you get the meaning o~ it. That thrbu h his 5 ir tual experience he'd actually come to an ~ub ~ . understanding the~ 1 arma without having read the books. Do you see what I mean? I mean the real knowledge comes from within. Where did the knowledge

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S(ctd) : that is in the sutras come from? It came from within the Buddha, within the Bodhisattvas. So if you tap the same source, well, you will gain the same knowledge and that is what you have to do; tap it within, not build it up from without. No doubt the records of the Buddha's teaching will inspire you and spark you off, but the real source is still within.

Stephanie : I think that's what Punyavati was asking about.

Punyavati : I was just thinking actually that I didn't complete my sentence properly. I didn't mention meditation. When I said that in the early days ~o~ cqme across Buddhism you do need to study the Dharma, but what I forgot to mention was the meditation and then ( ) that the meditation was enough and you didn't need to study the Dharma at all.

S : Well, it depends what you mean by 'study the Dharma'. Yes, meditation, one could say, is enough. But again, yoi'l have to I~cLrvL the method of meditation and for that one needs a teacher and sometimes the scriptures are helpful in making clear to you, in a~ much as they are the records of the experiences of the Buddhas and others, making clear to you the meaning of your experience. For instance, you may think you have attained the goal when you haven't. You may think your knowledge is complete when it isn't. Or you may misinterpret your experience in some other way. Or the scriptures may give you a hint on what you ought to be directing your mind to, investigating. So, I think I have said that you can only afford to dispense with study if you are in close personal contact with a teacher who can actually give you everything, so to spe~k, verbally, in the course of your personal communi~cation. It's as though the scriptures, the sutras, are substitutes for not having the Buddha around, but fortunately we've got the sutras, so we can read. Much of what the Buddha sa;& is applicable to us,"6fatft~s not a question of qequ~ing ourselves intellectually with everything he said, regardless of whether it applies to us or not. We find that some things that the Buddha said as re~orded in the scriptures really strike home ~re really meanL~9~~t so far as we are concerned. Tho~e are we especially meditate on and try to develop a genuine insight

into.

Punyavati : It's not so difficult with people who are interested in the Dharma or Buddhism or~ow a bit about the Dharma. Especially I find this in beginners' classes when they come to learn to meditate, and they're not really interested in anything specific~ and often they end up feeling that you just meditate and believe that all religions are one. And they become quite confused and their thinking becomes very woolly as well.

S : Yes. Well, this is , of course, one of the advantages of studying Buddhist literature, that 'miccha~itthis' are discovered, even 'miceha- ditthis' t~at~ore 9~n~ra) . Alsot~re1s medita~~n"~~~~~'tation is C

not really allowing yourself to be wafted into a rather pleasant agreeable, day-dreamy, sort of state. People think of it in that way. But if you read the Pali suttas or in the records of the Zen masters, yo~'ti 5oO~ ~L given a different idea.

Marlene : Do you think if someone does tend to have a logical approach that it's a hindrance to intuition?

S : That's quite a point. Some, of course, some great mathematicians have said that their greatest mathematical discoveries were made intuitively. So it would seem that the two are not~ecessarily incorpat~hie. Mayhe~e~ one can supplement the other or spark~ the other. I think the great danger is muddled thinking. I mean, the danger is you confuse muddled

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S(ctd) : thinking with intuition. You just have some sort of vague hunch, or even just a conditioned reaction to something or prejudice and you call that your intuition.

(break in tape)

S(ctd) : "investigate everything thoroughly." Well, it's more than hard, it's impossible. You might as well develop a higher faculty, a higher form of knowledge. Especially when it's a question of Buddhism. That's how you really come to know about Buddhism. You need.... Sometimes this faculty is called the eye of the Dharma. Have you heard that expression? It's said that you have the fleshly eye with which you see material objects and you have the divine eye which is a sort of, what shall we call it? clairvoyance, the clairvoyant faculty. And then you have the eye of the Dharma with which you actually see the truth, with which you

see Reality, so to speak. And the two other eyes, the eye of Wisdom which goes further still, and then the Buddha eye or the universal eye, which is a comprehensive spiritual vision.

: Where's that written about? That use of....

S I can't give you a specific reference. It's a sort of very general teaching which appears in a number of different places.

: It's at the back of ~Thurman's translation of the 'Vimalakirti Nirdeśa.' S :  
Does he give sources? I can't remember.

S : Well, he should do, being a scholar. It's also in the Buddhist Dictionary, I think.  
So, it's as though in the case of knowledge about Buddhism, it's not just a question of extending your knowledge on the horizontal as it were. Do you see what I mean? It's not a question of wider and wider and wider knowledge on that ordinary, intellectual information-gathering level. It's a question of developing a faculty of understanding on a higher level, so to speak, from which you can sort of look down on the lower levels and see them more comprehensively, or not even look down on those levels, ~~~t look up at ~ruth itself.

: If people have got clairvoyant faculties, that doesn't necessarily mean to say that they are more developed, does it? Or does it?

S : No, it just means they've got clairvoyant faculties.

They've just got clairvoyant faculties.

S : No, it doesn't mean that they are more spiritually developed though of course they may well be more sensitive~ and that does go with spiritual development. I mean, clairvoyance is not a transcendental faculty. You don't necessarily have transcendental insight~because you're clairvoyant. But certainly th~t is a development from a certain point of view. It's an extra, it's an additional faculty. It suggests a certain refinement of perception~ a certain sensitivity of being. So though it isn't a transcendental insight or a transcendental faculty, there's no need to depreciate it unduly. I mean, quite a number of people have sort of clairvoyant experiences

to . or from time time, ~experiences of clairaudience. It's not an uncommon thing; or telepathic experiences. These are all, so to speak, on the

same level. Sometimes people find they have the same dream. Anybody had this experience ever? To have the same dream as somebody else, you

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S(ctd) : share a dream. It's quite an odd experience. I mean, if you develop these

faculties, even if it's intermittent, your whole being has become a bit more sensitive, a bit more refined. You're operating on a more refined level. So there is a development even in mundane terms, but it is to be distinguished from the transcendental faculty.

: ( ) necessary to ( )?

S : No, it wouldn't be necessary. No. Although, I mean, even among the Buddha's Arahant disciples there were some, like Sariputra, who had no psychic faculties at all. He merely had Wisdom! He was merely, so to speak, the expert in 'prajna', whereas Moggallana had 'prajna', being an Arahant, but he also had the full complement of psychic powers.

Eve : Sometimes it distracted him. Like when he saw Sariputra being... throwing thunderbolts by somebody and Sariputra had a headache and Moggallana saw it all happening.

S : I wouldn't say 'distracted him' because he was already an Arahant! (It just helped him to see?) Alright, next saying: "It is hard to overcome selfishness and sloth." Oh, dear, it is hard, isn't it? Why selfishness and sloth? Obviously selfishness must figure, but why not selfishness and restlessness? Why selfishness and sloth? It's a very good word to remember.

Trish : Perhaps 'cos when you're selfish you tend to be very inward-looking.

S : Yes. I mean, you can be slothful from a spiritual point of view, even though you may be very active and busy from a worldly point of view. Sloth here is spiritual sloth. I mean, you remember something that Milarepa says. Is it Milarepa? Or it might be sGam.Po.Pa or in 'The Sayings of the Gurus', but one of those sources; is - what is laziness? It means being very, very busy and active in all sorts of Worldly affairs. That is laziness. So you could say much the same of sloth. Sloth means being very active in worldly affairs but neglecting your own spiritual development. This is sloth.

: The opposite of 'virya'.

S : Yes. Yes, the opposite of 'virya'. Because 'virya' is not just ordinary, worldly energy, but energy in pursuit of the good, the skilful, enthusiasm for the good.

: Does being outwardly active mean, in terms that you are actually being quite energetic and ignore

S : Yes. Even in a purely ordinary sense I'm sure we all know people who give the impression of being busy and active by just rushing hither and thither, but actually they are not getting very much done, even in a worldly sense. They look very busy but really they are not. Really they are just chasing backwards and forwards. They are not really doing very much. It seems you are familiar with this?

: Yes!

Trish : It's very easy to do it, say, in the cafe'. Just sort of get busy and go from one thing to the other and don't actually finish anything. Just off you go and make all the excuses you like for not finishing.

S : What about selfishness? This is another good old Anglo-Saxon word. Maybe there needs to be a little clear thinking on the subject of selfishness. Have you heard of enlightened selfishness? What is enlightened selfishness? Well, it is an ordinary expression.

S of 42 5 D4 Tl 18 1q9 : Is it?

S : Yes. Enlightened selfishness, well, it does occur, it's used, it's current, let us say. Enlightened selfishness. What does that mean? What is enlightened selfishness?

Stephanie : Does it mean having regard to your own interest?

S : Yes. Having a quite objective regard to your own interest. I mean, you are also a human being with certain needs, with certain requirements. Why should they not be taken into consideration, just like anybody else's? I mean, in the case of the bodhisattva, he vows to deliver all beings. That includes him, he's not excluded. When you do the 'metta-bhavan~' you direct it to all living beings. That includes you. So there is a sort of enlightened selfishness. ~

: Retreats.

S : Retreats, holidays~pocket money. Don't spend it all at once! So, I think, especially~with~our Christian background, we should be careful how we use this word 'selfishness'. I mean, unselfishness doesn't mean deliberately making a martyr of yourself. j\$~)~ ~? Noel : It's one of the most frequent criticisms coming from outside that Buddhists are selfish.

S : Yes. Especially when they meditate, apparently.

It's important to know how to counter it.

S Yes. There are two criticisms. You're selfish and you're escapist. I mean, I think really you should retaliate here and take the offensive. I mean, if people get involved with Buddhism they're escapist, but if they sit in front of their wretched television sets all night then they're not being escapist, apparently. I mean, everything else is not escapist, only Buddhism is escapist. ~£~ i~votv~ wct~ Buddhism is escapist. You can go to the pub every night, well, that's not escapism, but you get involved with Buddhism - apparently it is.

Stephanie : Perhaps people are upset because we've escaped them!

S : Perhaps they're upset we've escaped successfully! That's what people mean, being sort of selfish. Well, they say, well, Buddhists are

selfish because they don't have families, don't support their families,  
but when you first get married, I mean, is it out of pure altruism  
that you take unto yourself that husband or that wife? I mean, is it out  
of a public vice or public duty that, you then proceed to have children?  
You have to regard all that as unselfish apparently and the wretched  
Buddhist who doesn't inflict further inhabitants on the planet is regarded  
as selfish! I would have thought it was the other way round!  
I think you must really rebut these sort of accusations. I was really  
sort of quite appalled in a way, reading about this popular hero in  
Poland, Lech Walesa, or something like that. Alright, he's very good  
in the trade union line, maybe, but how responsible

(end of tape)

\* Insert ~d~'ir~or' (p~iso)

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~(Insert on In some religious traditions you are given the impression that you mustn't love  
yourself at all, you must hate yourself, deny yourself. You mustn't ever be selfish. But, no,  
that isn't the Buddhist view. (Youself in a manner of speaking there's no sort of  
metaphysical view implied here.) You must also attend to yourself. Do you see what I mean?  
Don't go to the opposite extreme. It isn't a question of either devoting yourself to your own  
interests or devoting yourself to the interests of others. No, devote yourself to both as best  
you can. Look after yourself too, have met to for yourself as well. Keep yourself strong and  
healthy, otherwise you can't do much for other people. This is enlightened selfishness, one

could say. It's a more balanced attitude. Don't feel guilty about looking after yourself,  
keeping yourself healthy, giving yourself exercise, relaxation, medical treatment, rest; you  
need those things.

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S (ctd) : ( ) a public figure who is sufficiently irresponsible, whether a Catholic  
or otherwise to have seven children.

: But is it necessarily irresponsible if he's taking care of seven human beings?

: ( ) :6 )

S : ( ). No, I'm just thinking in terms of the general population problem. It doesn't matter, maybe you are sufficiently well-off to support twenty children, maybe you can support four wives - or ten! That doesn't mean you should just because you can afford to. It's also a question of the world as a whole<sup>4</sup> The whole population problem etc.

: I think people get upset because you're not supporting the status quo, you're not supporting the government system. 5t'j 1~Q ~~~~

S : Yes, exactly. It's like a threat. : You're not paying back for your years at University. S : What, by producing more children to send to University?

working for the good of the country.

S : Well, you might take it... well, you are working for the good of the country, in the best possible way. Here again one should take the offensive. It is not that you've opted out. You are deeply concerned with the state of the country, you really do believe that it would help if more and more people did practise meditation, live in communities, work in co-ops, if we didn't live under a purely capitalist system;~ Yoii could then say your socialist piece, if you like! But we are actually trying to do something to improve conditions, and at least we can point to a fairly happy membership. Say: look around. Who is more happy? Are we or are you? Who is getting more out of life?

: A sure indication of selfishness!

S : h~~~f?heir idea of unselfishness is sharing their misery with everybody! We prefer to share our happiness if we possibly can - and they call it selfishness! I think that it's really~J~jectionable when people who are really leading thorough~y selfish, self-indulgent lives bring that accusation against Buddhists. Tt S~oqS a serious distortion of values and should~~ebut~~d vigorously without any apology. I hope you do this whenever occa,S~ion arises.

You can even question - well, what is wrong with escapism? What's wrong with getting away from pain and suffering? If you can really get away from a~in and suffering. Who wants pain and suffering anyway? Is there a~yr~~~rt~~ in enduring those things? Who wants to live under, what shall I say? an inadequate ~~unjust social system? Is it really selfish wanting to escape from all that and to create something better? One should really take them up on these things.

I mean, I really think it is quite dreadful that people who are involved in, say, spiritual life, or Buddhism, or developing themselves should be expected to be on the defensive all the time, having to apologise for themselves and defend th~~~~~0~~jLt~0~ It's the other people who ought to be doing the apolo&g~5~ng~ ~eaven knows, they've got enough to apologise for! So I think, in a way, you've ~ot to be more positively aggressive. Yes, indeed.

That comes from a spirit of confidence in what you're doing.



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S : Yes, in confidence in what you are doing.

Carla : It also comes from thinking it out very very clearly and knowing precisely what you are talking about. Politically too.

S : Yes. Presumably you don't feel as though you've crept away into some little Buddhist funkhole, do you?

Carla : It's the number of times I've been told I've 'copped out' : Copped out?

Opted out. Getting involved in this

S : Well, it seems a bit ironical when you are working ten hours a day in a co-op~

: Yes. S : For what they would agree was probably a pittance.~

to ~av~ opted out, taking things easy to be selfish, (~~k n 'n4  
,n~cr o#' a t~I< ~~~9er

"It is hard to overcome selfishness and sloth."~ One might even say it is really hard to overcome your feelings of guilt about being positively selfish. For someone in the West, maybe that is more relevant. Sometimes at least. Or put it this way - it is hard to overcome pseudo-unselfishness based upon feelings of guilt. Do you see what I mean? That sort of pseudo-unselfishness ought to be overcome. You ought to be selfish. Positively selfish, in the sense of genuinely caring for yourself as well as for other people. Don't be afraid to make your needs known. Don't be afraid to meet your needs, your genuine needs, as a human being.

: I think that is quite common, being....

S : I'm referring to genuine need, not to little whims and fancies. But I'm quite sure some people do neglect their own genuine need sometimes.

: Particularly their health.

S : Yes. Perhaps people don't give themselves the rest that they need. Sometimes they almost can't because they're working compulsively.

: It's one of the most obvious ways of ( ), conforming to what other people think ( ) other people's sets of expectations and standards.

S : "It is hard to avoid making light of not having studied (the Way) enough," Well, what is this all about? "It is hard to avoid making light of not having studied (the Way) enough," the ~k'~r~~no~~~.

Trish : Procrastination, in a sense.

S : But what does it mean - "making light of not having studied (the Way)"  
~nou~t,? What does this suggest or imply?

: Not taking it seriously.

S : Not taking it seriously. If someone says to you, you haven't studied the Dharma very much - well, it really doesn't matter you're not taking the Dharma seriously. It's not ~ust a question of studying the

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S(ctd) : Dharma and not taking that seriously. It's a question of not taking the Dharma itself sufficiently seriously.

: It can also be a cover-up for falling short of your ideal. S : Yes. Carla  
: A rationalisation sometimes.

S : Maybe you are deficient in metta and you say: "Well, metta doesn't matter very much anyway. You know, it's insight that co~ts."

Ann : So you could use the little phrase that was not the last one but the one before as a good reason for not having studied enough. The fact that you can't ever study all of it.

S : Right. Indeed, yes. You could say: "Ah, well. It's impossible for one person to know everything."""~"p~erhaps you haven't even acquainted yourself with the Four Noble Truths. ~~~~~ Do you ever have quizzes, Dharma ~i~~~5~ 1It might be a good idea.

Elsie : We used to have that in Malaysia.

S : I had one years and years ago at Archway and people didn't come out very well. There was only one person who really shone and that was Dhammadinna with Marichi a reasonably good second. Most of the other people ~uSt nowhere. Maybe that is not a bad thing to do in a community when you've got a free evening, ~erhaps have a quiz. What are the Four Noble Truths? What are the Seven Bodh~angas? What are the Twelve Nidanas? I'm afraid Subhuti reported from a recent retreat that he conducted that there was a horrendous ignorance of these things and most people had heard of the Nidanas but could not actually name more than two or three and that seems really deplorable. So maybe one should check up on these things and perhaps a Dharma quiz would help from time to time. I've got a feeling that Elsie would be very good at this!

: Elsie'll have to ask the questions!

S : Maybe make it more fun than just looking it up in the Buddhist dictionary. Or perhaps you could have two or th~ee every morning before breakfast or something like that!

Carla : We often take turns on actually clarifying. We did the Twelve Nidanas in study group recently with Elsie. Quite a few of us have come from Sanghadevi's study group, and we took turns in elucidating and going into. And that really helps.

S : It isn't just a question of committing tA~ list of the Twelve Nidanas to heart, but understanding the mechanism of the process so to speak. If you understand the mechanism you can reconstruct the Nidanas even if you don't actually remember them. It's because you've understood the process. You can recreate~ the chain, so to speak.

Sulocana: In modern terms?

S : Even in modern terms, yes.

: We were thinking in our study group, if we had time free, perhaps we might construct a modern one because we found some of the images didn't mean....

S : Some people have done this. A friend of mine in Devon years ago did a painting for me of the Wheel of Life in modern terms. There's an Italian

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S(ctd) : Buddhist friend of ours who has done the same thing. That could be interesting.

: We thought about having a Dharma crossword sometimes.

S : Yes. Well, it would help people to brush up their Dharma knowled~e. So, 'it is hard to avoid making light of not having studi~\~ ~~~think 'study' perhaps shouldn't be understood in too narrow a sense here. I mean, to study the Way is also an idiom for practising the Way. It is hard to avoid making light of not having practised the Dharma sufficiently, not having put enough energy into it. In some Buddhist countries you can hear people say: "Ah well, I've got plenty more lives ahead to practise the Dharma." Alright, the next one: "It is hard to keep the mind evenly balanced." Why is it hard to keep the mind evenly balanced?~ Well, £f you find it hard, that is.

: Distraction

S Distraction . But it says 'evenly balanced'. So what form does the distraction take? It suggests a special kind of distraction. Ann : Extremes.

S : Extremes! Yes! It's when your mind oscillates between extremes. Do you find that that actually happens? Like between elation and depression, for instance? Yes? What other sort of common extremes do you think o~ci~~t~ ~tw~~?

: Of energy and sloth.

S : ~~l~}~~ or is it hyper-activity? For some people hope and ~Is reayenergy despair, optimism and pessimism. They can oscillate between wildest optimism and

~loomiest pessimism.

: Or confidence ~nd insecurity.

S : Ah, yes. Or love a~d hate. It's very difficult to keep the mind evenly balanced and at the same time have the mind in a highly positive state. It is not a question of the mind ~ust being a bit dull and not particularly going this way, not particularly going that. It should be a positive, even d~n~n~ic state of balance, ~ven balance.

But not rigidly balanced in a way that can't move.

~v'Ln S : The evenly balanced mind is the non-reactive mind, you could say9 ~the creative mind. The creative mind is evenly balanced.

: Perhaps before we've quite got to that state, Bhante, it's ~bit like seeing the state for what it is, a~c(

S : Yes. And objectivity. Not reacting violently in either one way or the other.

: I relate this very much to that I'm being happy, healthy and human, ~s  
T~t r~ ~ ~ ~e ~af~a~ ~d ~;~~. S : You could say that 'upeksha', the fourth  
'brahma vihara', is the state of mind being evenly balanced at quite a high level.  
It's also following the Middle Way, between extremes or above extremes.

: Would that imply... I know sometimes people talk about how they work and it's better to... some people like to have a little bit of different things in every day and other people might say: "Well, I want to go

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(ctd) : away for three months and work for so many months." That actually, in effect, you do have to have more of a balance of everything all the time, time on your own and time..

S : Well, that's a different kind of balance, ~ balance between different interests, or even different aspects of the spiritual life. But I think the sort of bal~nce that is being talked about here is a balance between the reactive extremes that you could go to. Whereas in the case you mention, it isn't a case of reactive extremes but of different, even complementary, aspects of the spiritual life~ all of which require attention sooner or later.

: What's the best thing to do about being depressed?~ecause~I find some- times when I have been really depressed-talking about extremes-I ami~as~~ wt'~~~"practically incapable of doing anything. So it would be sensible to get out of it.

S : It is said~very often depression is blocked anger. You won't allow yourself to be angry and your energy is blocked up there, you can't do anything, you become depressed. So

it's almost as though the first thing you have to do is realise that you are in fact angry, to contact your own anger, to acknowledge it. You must be angry about something. You do need to be clear what it's you're angry about. You could be very angry about something~ in fact, but not be acknowledging it to yourself. Has anybody ever experienced this sort of, as it were, regressing, in a positive sense, from a state of depression to one of anger? Feeling ( ) perhaps, well, certainly anger is preferable to depression.

Punyavati? : I went to see someone in a mental hospital quite recently and I felt really uneasy all the time while I was sitting in the waiting room. I was sitting there and I suddenly realised it was all the anger. They all suffered from manic depression for a long period and there is this anger underneath. It vibrates all the time and I felt in a very unpredictable situation and every time somebody came near me I felt myself jumping or protecting myself or moving away~and there's a lot of anger or even repressed anger there. I could/sense it in the air.

Sulocana : Some have drugs so that they can't even feel what it is.

Carla : Then it follows that perhaps judo or karate or something like that would help people with depression.

S : Well, if you could get 'right' it, because as Annie says in that sort of state you just feel you can't do anything. That is the difficulty. So perhaps you have to contact your anger to some extent before you can even take up the judo or karate. Maybe you just need to smash a few things! Some people do! They smash crockery, smash a window and they feel better then, the depression lessens.~~hey can't do it mechanically, they've got to do it because they feel angry. Maybe it's a question of telling somebody what you really think. Maybe you are angry at them0~with them about something and you've sat on it and it's turned sour, it's turned to depression. Usually it's someone who is near and dear to you, parents, husband or wife or children perhaps. If it's children you have to be a bit more careful because if they are small you can~~ sort of just take it out on them but at least you have to acknowledge t~s, o~rs~~~ how you feel.

: Are you saying that true depression, when you feel totally, utterly sort of alone and inadequate, is that likely to be (one of these cases of anger?)?

S : That seems to be a little bit more than depression. Well, how does one feel when one feels depressed? What's depressed? The word is

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S(ctd) : significant. You feel pressed. Squashed down. ~ressed as well as depressed; >o~ ~~~ trampled upon. Trampled into the dirt perhaps. Not a pleasantf~(ing.

Noel : That leads to alienation.

S : Leads to alienation. That's only if you are not acknowledging your feelings of anger. I think if one does feel depressed one has very seriously to consider the possibility that one may be sitting on a lot of anger. It isn't invariably the case but it often is the case. I'm not familiar with the details but it is said that some forms of depression have a purely chemical cause, in which case one maybe needs to look into one's diet, but fairly often, maybe much more often, depression is due to blocked anger.

: Bhante, occasionally I have the experience of meditation that's like I'm sitting on a sea bed. Is it actually, necessarily a bigger world. (6~) Do you, well, could you comment on that?

S : It's difficult to comment on personal experiences. It's easy - to label something as depression or whatever but I think one should be a little careful because from what you said before it didn't sound exactly like depression. Depression is a sort of psychological (In a way what you were mentioning before sounded a bit) at times existential.

: I suppose the anger - Do you have to take responsibility for all the anger that you experience? Or is there somehow...

S : Well, yes, I suppose you do. It's yours. You've become angry, you feel it. I mean, it's easy to say: "you made me angry," my anger is justified," but nonetheless you feel it, it's yours, it's you: So to that extent you have responsibility for it.

But I just felt that there was more anger than I could've accumulated somehow.

S : Ah than the objective situation justifies. Well, that may be. Some anger goes back, say, to childhood, even to infancy. One can see that small children have terrible rages. One might think out of all proportion to the cause. But from their point of view it's not at all out of proportion to the cause because they may feel that their whole security has been totally removed and they feel just blind anger. There can be a residue of that still in the adult.

: - But you wouldn't subscribe to the idea of you bringing it karmically with you?

S : Oh, from previous lives? I think that is possible. Yes, that is possible. In the same way as you can presumably bring any skilful or unskilful tendency from previous lives. Maybe one shouldn't be in a hurry to jump to that conclusion, but from a Buddhist point of view it is a possibility. I think probably it is sufficient to trace it back to early childhood. You can see little children getting into these sort of blind rages, black rages, it's almost a life and death thing. They feel really intensely. No inhibitions. No inhibitions about expressing it. The fact that they can't actually murder you, well, that is a bit confusing because sometimes they would like to! They don't think of it as murder, but very often I'm sure, the infant could murder mother, really murder her! Do away with her!

Carla : It happens to ( ) if I'm not careful.

S of 42 5 D4 T2 7 S : Ah. : I think ( )  
S : Ah.

So if you contact that blind rage in yourself and you still know it's infantile, what's the best way to cope with it? Because obviously one doesn't want to inflict it upon others.

S : I think perhaps you'll have to allow~some harmless expression to relieve your feelings. Maybe smash a few things or thump a pillow or something therapeutic, or utter a great primal scream. But certainly acknowledge it to yourself and offer it to others who are sympathetic.

Punyavati : Yes. I was wondering if it's possible, if you can't talk to the people concerned... To be able to talk to somebody who is able to be sympathetic.

S : I think that helps, yes. Get it out of your system.

S : But I think sooner or later, in the interest of communication, you have to have it out with the person concerned. Because if you feel anger towards someone and you are not expressing it, it introduces an element of disharmony into the relationship, and the chances are that you feel angry, paradoxically, those who are nearest and dearest to you you can't be honest with them it really affects the whole relationship and it may end up as a non-relationship, an alienated sort of relationship. So even if initially you just talk things over with some third person, sooner or later you actually have to have it out with the person who is really concerned, who is directly concerned, and express your feelings. I don't say just let your anger hang out, but you can let them know that this is in fact how you felt or maybe how you still feel. You do it in an objective way, in a positive way. There is nothing that gets in the way of communication like unexpressed feelings. You might feel it's sort of a bit of a risk to let that person know what you actually felt on a particular occasion but you have to do it. It's a choice. You might feel: "If I really let them know what I felt it might end the relationship," or put if you don't, well, sooner or later it will end the relationship for effective purposes even if you stay together, so to speak. You won't really, it won't really be a real relationship, a real communication. That's not to say you must let fly on every occasion, with you no. That's going to the other extreme. But there must be honesty of communication which involves letting the other person know how you feel, otherwise you'll just build up a wall of silence gradually between you. Maybe the other person won't know what's going on. The other person will feel, will perceive, that wall of silence but won't be able to understand why it's been there at all. built, why : It can be quite difficult when you feel angry towards someone and yet at the same time you realise there's not really any objective reason for it. Something very small has happened and sparked off a big reaction in you.

S : Well, it couldn't have been very small for you if that is how you felt. So you have to say to the other person: "Well, look, I really got angry, I really got upset, I know it's ridiculous, I know it's a perfectly trivial thing but this is really how I felt. I'm sorry, I can't help it." At least you have to be open in that sort of way and then communication is re-established. And sometimes, we know people do get annoyed and -upset over the silliest little things~ especially people

who have quite a close tie, perhaps they are living together, that's

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S(ctd) : when such things are most likely to occur. A tiny, tiny thing will really upset people.

: I think those small things often seem to represent a much bigger set of attitudes. It's not exactly the 'last straw' situation, but something on those lines. There are some conflicts about who is taking more responsibility, for example, and one little thing will sum it up.

S : Yes. Who is to do the washing up. Or in the case of married people the wife sometimes feels it very strongly if the husband doesn't remember the wedding anniversary! Do you see what I mean? Even smaller things than that. Even the way somebody speaks or looks or doesn't speak or doesn't look! " ~o ld you about such and such and you didn't seem to be interested~~~om%ton~teeecv(~nh~told me she realised one day that she really hated her husband and she realised also wh~ it was. She just hated the way he drank his coffee! It sounds so ridiculous, but this is what happens in relations Certainly things become loaded with implications and significance beyond themselves. hSiO~ you shouldn't mind telling someone that you hate the way he drinkst coffee, or hate him.

Elsie : In a way, it is very much like expecting things so much. Not saying things but expecting it to be what you want it to be.

S : It really makes one realise how ridiculous and absurd and irrational human relations are. Especially the so-called closer relationships; the closer they become, the more absurd they seem to become very often! ( ) ~aV~~~n~~~~ay you can se&~perfectly absurd but you can't help your'si~~an4 iA the process of it you are inflicting very often pain and suffering on yourself, so4it is hard to keep the mind evenly balanced.~ ~ r~I~y is. Then: "It is hard to refrain from affirmation and denial." Well, one can understand it in a very metaphysical sense, but one must also understand it in an ordinary everyday sense. When someone says some- thing to you very often you feel an impulse either to agree with it wholeheartedly or to contradict it completely. You can't sort of just think it over and think: "Yes, maybe under certain circumstances or from a certain point of view." You have to react quite strongly: "Oh yes, that's quite true, definitely," or "I don't agree with that at all, that's completely wrong. " Do you see what I mean? And this is connected with opinionatedness. In this morning's study group we were talking about opinionatedness. People expect you to have an opinion. You definitely agree or definitely disagree.~~~me- times you can't. I find very often people try to almost force me to have an opinion, to say what I think and in fact, I don't think any- thing about that at all. I need time to think about it, to ponder it a bit. But to be expected to give an instant opinion, a snap judgement, which I don't care to do. You are expected to react instantly with affirmation or denial, some- times in connection with some quite complex situation which requires careful study.

It juSt struck mea~ta~ television interviews £cause people ~~~~n that, and the whole mechanism is a quick reply.



S : They want something definite, something which is yes or no.

Sulocana : And you can be accused f..lying, whichever you say. People want~you to have some opinion. ~Or to put you in a box.

S : Yes. Or preferably they want to get two people together in two different boxes and have them go hammer and tongs and this is called a good discussion. Controversial. They like this, this adversarial.

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S(ctd) : This seems to be the trend. It really sometimes seems so ridiculous. They get one person on one side and the other person over the other side and they just have a go at each other. This is ac~ite childish. They might just as well have a fight.

: It seems one step up from a boxing match. ~ n~ ~&~r~ abo~ ~a S : ~Maybe it is. It is sort of non-violent, I suppose. There are so many things about which one can't commit oneself one way or the other, can't formulate an opinion one way or the other, but one is expected to. One is expected to or called upon either to affirm or deny, for or against, black or white.

: Right or wrong.

S : Right or wrong. Good or bad. God or devil! Ann : It's like being asked to sign a petition in the street...

S : Oh, yes. Ann : . . you don't have time actually to read what it '5 about.

S : Yes, well (the chap?) isn't concerned that you read it. He only wants your signature, very often. It's a bit like that story about the mother taking the children along to the museum and she says: "Come on, come on! Be quick! Don't stop and look at ~ything otherwise you won't get around in time!

if everybody stopped to read the petition he wouldn't collect enough signatures.

Punyavati? : Well, this implies taking sides, doesn't it?

S : Yes. Yes, I think it's a deeply rooted human instinct and maybe not, biologically speaki~ a bad one, to take sides. One can feel oneself almost instinctively taking sides in flA~ituation, not because of any abstract considerations of right and wrong but because of one's, in a way, love of taking sides. You enjoy being on this side rather than on that and figb~in~pte~pl~ on the other side. A very primitive, very basic, human emotion - 'them and us'. -

: Also gives you a lot of strength by allowing yourself to. ... S :  
 Yes, yes. It's the opposite of the previous evenly balanced mind.  
 S : Yes, yes, indeed.

: But if it is a basic human impulse to take side~, in some way that is  
 presumably ( )

S : Or at least, to use the fashionable jargon, a sublimated (approach?). You take sides  
 with the skilful.

: Does it also relate to the neutral stage in the metta, where trying sort of to feel...? I  
 find that very hard~ that stage, because whenever I think of someone I either don't like them  
 or I do like them. It's hard to find someone I don't actually feel anything about unless I've  
 never seen them before! Just pick a stranger, a quite abstract person.

S : The neutral person is very often someone you've seen a number of times

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S(ctd) : but in a definite situation, where you don't~notice them as a person. For  
 instance, you may go into a shop quite regularly to buy something and you are served by the  
 same person, bnt you don't pay much attention to them as an individual because you are just  
 concerned with getting whatever you've gone in to buy. So they remain neutral. You don't  
 have any particular liking for them and you don't have any disliking for them. You don't feel  
 called upon to have. So they are neutral. So, I think people often remain neutral for you under  
 those sort of conditions. Of course you may be a positive, friendly person who just  
 makes friends on the spot even if you're just buying a can of beans from somebody over the  
 counter. You may be that sort of person, but that doesn't usually happen, I - - think, ~s '~?

: I have that sort of difficulty. If they're neutral it means I've forgotten them anyway.

S : If there genuinely aren't any neutral people in your universe, you don't really have  
 that sort of problem, well, perhaps you can skip that third stage, but be careful about that.  
 Otherwise you might find yourself skipping all the stages.

: It's always f~lt to me (that) I use someone I don't know very well, rather th~~~atve an  
 emotional reaction to because then it seemed trying to develop an equal amount of metta was  
 then by comparison (balanced?).

~OL&~ ~n~, ~ t~~ ~rso~ S : The neutral person usually, towards whom you don't  
 have any particular feelings of either friendship or of enmity. They just sort of leave you  
 cold, which means that you haven't really perhaps established any sort of personal c ntact with  
 them at all. It's difficult to establish contact an~e sl igitly negatively inclined or slightly  
 positively inclined.

~7~r~a : Yes, that's what I meant.

S : Maybe one doesn't ever have e~~~ ~~~~I with regard to people9

absolute neutrality but some are definitely more neutral than others. So maybe just take the most neutral person in your experience.

: You sort of weigh them up? (?) (?) S : Well, that happens in the fourth stage too. You weigh up all your enemies then you sort of weigh them up stage five, provided you genuinely don't have any enemies. In the old days people coming to classes in London quite often ~ -

(end of side one)

S(ctd) : If you can't find anybody that you hate just have a good look inside the family circle! Because very often they hadn't thought to look there because they took it for granted that you loved your parents, you loved your children, loved your brothers and sisters, but very often they could find someone they hated within the family circle.

: This still happens in beginners' classes. They claim they can't find anyone they hate. If you give them six months they soon find lots of people to hate!

S : They usually say it with a terrible sort of complacency. Almost an

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S(ctd) : air of spiritual superiority - well- they don't hate anybody! They're not usually people straight off the street but people who've been in contact with some kind of religious group or movement before. So: "It is hard to refrain from affirmation and denial."

: I find on the more personal level that the great problem I have is always seeing my behaviour and my feelings in terms of how other people would respond to it. It seems to be a great thing to try and break through from that.

S : You mean thinking of one's own behaviour just in terms of what other people would think or how they would regard you?

: Yes. I often, like on retreat find (...) things that are going on in my mind. What so-and-so would think of me thinking this, or ridiculous things like that.

|          |   |                       |                                              |                       |         |
|----------|---|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| S        | : | Why does one do that? | :                                            | Lack of confidence, I |         |
| suppose. | S | :                     | I suppose it's lack of confidence.           | :                     | Lack of |
| metta?   | S | :                     | Lack of metta. It's more than that, actually |                       |         |

Stephanie : Perhaps you use other people to think your own thoughts. It isn't really those other people. Those people represent different aspects of

you because, after all, there aren't other people involved. It's you thinking: "What do I think of myself?"

S : You are bouncing your thoughts off other people.

Stephanie : Yes. You could call it a reference group

- I mean S : Mm. It could be that you don't exist for yourself. You exist only as you are perceived by other people. Perhaps there is very little that is there of your own, as it were. Again, this is one of the reasons why solitary retreats are so useful. There's nobody around to perceive you. Nobody around to see you as this or that or the other. So the question is - how do you see yourself? You might go to the mirror one morning, you look and there's nobody there!

: I did that actually on a solitary retreat. I noticed that I saw myself in the mirror after a few days it was like a totally different person. It was really - I had a very different attitude towards myself.

S : It's very likely you're still seeing yourself as somebody saw you very early in life. Maybe you're still seeing yourself as Daddy's good little girl or something like that. If people very definitely see you in a certain way and insist on seeing you that way over a long period of time, it's very difficult for you not to see yourself in that way, whether it's something positive or something negative.

Carla : I think that's one of the ways the family binds you because they perpetrate a particular view of yourself. You don't like what you find outside.

S : Quite a few of our Friends have reported that when they go back home to see their families, after perhaps being away for a couple of years, even, within the Friends' situation, they really feel or they find that their parents in particular, maybe their brothers and sisters too, see

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S(ctd) : them in the old way. See them as they were or see them as they used to see them and insist on doing that, and they feel themselves being drawn into that and sort of going back feeling like that, feeling in a way that corresponds to the way in which the family is perceiving them. And they find this sometimes quite dreadful.

: It can be very interesting to go home with someone who knows you 'n your new life, take them to your family situation and feel different sides.

S : And also vice versa. Taking someone from your family to your new situation. It has been known for parents even, to come and visit their children in the communities in which they live. They come sometimes very gingerly, not at all sure what they are going to find. I heard recently of somebody's father going to the Centre and it was quite difficult for him to go there. He just didn't know what he might find there, all sorts of strange goings-on. I think he had different ideas about a Buddhist Centre, but he just didn't know

what to expect. So it was as if he might encounter anything. But actually he was quite reassured when he found that it was quite ordinary~ friendly, reasonable, and he was happy that was where his son was going. ~~~~~ wasn't worried any more. So sometimes it's useful to bring people from the old situation into the new situation where you are and you meet them on your ground sometimes, not just meet them on their ground. It's quite a good thing maybe to invite your mother, your father or brother or sister or old friend along to the community to see where you are living, or to your Centre. Show them where you go, what you are involved in, otherwise they might have the most dreadful misunderstandings or just very daft forebodings of what you might be mixed up in. at

Carla : Yes, last summer when I went back home,~first I felt I didn't have any- body to measure it by. First I felt like I was going to be S~ack into something but I kept up with my metta pract~cVeer£~n~a~y the time I left, you know what she said? "Boy! That meditation must be doing something for you. You are really easy to get along with." That was a real compliment, actually, coming from her!

S : In the old days I remember that we had an elderly gentleman coming to our classes at (Sukhura?). Every week he came, just to that class. He came for a couple of years at least and one day I asked him: "How is it that you are so regular? You never miss." Whereas most of our friends, at that time especially, they missed from time to time. So he said: "My wife says that since I've started meditation I've become so "

easy to live with she doesn't let me miss. personally So that show does work, even people not~interested in meditation ~ it does work, it does change people it makes them easier to live with. Sometimes, of course, it makes them more difficult to live with in other kinds of ways. They insist on being vegetarian or something like that. But people do insist on seeing you in a certain way and insisting you should conform to that. I've had quite a lot of experience of this sort of thing. People insisting on seeing me in a certain way and expecting me to live up to it or live down to it. I remember there was one example, I might have mentioned before, again in the very early days of the Friends. We were on retreat in Haslemere and for some reason or other the talk turned upon Trungpa Rinpoche and Trungpa Rinpoche had recently got married. And one of the women who was there who was quite and the Tibetan lamas are getting married right a~~~~9T&at\b~ikhi~i~ a Friend of ours said: " It's really strange the way eft sL a e said, ~~~eret~~ one thing we can be sure of," turning to me," our Bhante will never do anything like that, will you, Bhante?" So I said, "Well, the future is always open, Margaret." So she said: "No! Well, you

wouldn't, would you?" So I said: "The future is completely open." So

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S(ctd) : she turned to the others and said: "No! He's just joking." So people insist on seeing youj\$& ~r~£~j&r W~~j and you've jolly well got to stick to it! So this sort of pressure is coming upon you all the time from various quarters . ~~~t you must just insist on being yourself~~ntot give into this sort of pressure. It's coming from all quarters.

: It's a positive thing spending time with people that appreciate you being yourself and giving you space to be yourself and actually encourage you to be yourself.

S : Well, it's quite a strain being with people that do anything else, I  
#iL'8i~ ~y ~ve : Sometimes you don't even notice it because it's so habitual to be...

S : Yes. Because you become accustomed to seeing yourself in the way they see you. Anyway, let's do at least one more. "It is hard to come into contact with clear perception (of the Way)." Well, this means it's hard to come into contact with real ~nsight. Well, that's very obvious, isn't it? What do you think is really meant by 'clear perception of the Way! clear perception of the Dharma?

: True understanding?

S : True understanding. An objective understanding, an understanding free from all obscurations.

Sulocana : ( ) contact means that one has the same, that it has to be the same perception.

S : In a sense.

Sulocana : I mean that it accords with someone's perception.

S : What does 'clear' mean? Clear perception? Obviously this is a metaphorical expression.

: Pure.

S : Pure. Yes. Undistorted. When you become just like a mirror, you just reflect.~~v~~"n that comparison isn't quite adequate because the mirror is, as it were, unchanging, it's static.

: Does this mean the same as having clear perception of the Way or does it mean coming into contact with somebody else who has it?

S : It could mean, grammatically, it could mean either. You could say~, well, yes, it is hard to come into contact with somebody who has a clear perception of the Way. It's even more difficult~~come into contact with your own clear perception of the Way. They are both hard. In fact the former is a bit less hard.

~~e: : This seems to relate to what you were saying before about... that when you take on a practice you see the world like the visionary... what was it?.. the visionary faculty. This seems to relate to that.

S : Y~nSe can read, for instance, lots of books on Buddhism but often you are left with a feeling that the author, if the book did not have a clear

perception of the Dharma, that he's quite confused, that he is just

retailing information, recounting facts, relying on second-hand sources. That there is no clear perception of the Way, there is no real

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S(ctd) : understanding of his own. Sometimes you get the feeling quite strongly that the author of this book is really quite confused about the Dharma rather than having any clear perception of it.

S~,h~r~i~: I should have thought that you couldn't have completely clear perception unless you were Enlightened or something fairly close. I wondered whether it could be something to do with provisional perception, that is the best perception you can have for yourself to take you on your next step forward.

S : Yes. A clear perception of what is the Way, what is the Dharma for you, what is the next step forward.

~erI1~rt;~ : If there is going to be a Way, then obviously you are not there yet, so you are not going to be completely clear.

~~se~ a5 S : So, bearing in mind that 'Way' does seem to be tantamount to 'Dharma', but, yes, it could apply to a clear~p~fiminary perception of the Way or the Dharma as well as to transcendental insight or vision itself. Even a clear perception of the next step is difficult enough sometimes.

: Is it because you tend to be bounded by the boundary of a particular problem? You have to ( ) the next insight.

S : Sometimes the situation in which you find yourself is so complicated you don't know. It's very hard to find out what really is the best thing for you to do, what is really the step you should take, what step constitutes an improvement in the situation, so to speak, and to that extent constitutes ~ step on the path, one might say, or at least a step in the direction of the path. Sometimes with the best will in the world, you don't know what is best for you to do. It's very difficult to see in a complex situation clearly. Very often one does find oneself in a complex situation. All sorts of factors are taken into consideration, all sorts of pulls, all sorts of interests, all sorts of people, responsibilities, obligations, wishes. One wonders how people ever manage to take a single step. In worldly life, very often, you can act only with a certain amount of blindness. Do you see what I mean?

: If your mind is clear, though, it's easier, however complex the situation is but often your mind won't allow you to see the solution. You might have a vague idea that something's the answer but you discount it because you think somebody else will tell you to or you

think that you can't possibly do that, so you cast around for something else.

S : Yes. Sometimes the solution is staring you in the face.  
If someone higher up on the spiritual path could help you find...

S : Yes. At least help you, not instead of telling you what to do, but helping you to see the situation more clearly so that you could see for yourself what you ought to do. To help you clarify the issues involved. Sometimes that is sufficient. When the issues involved are clarified, well, you can see quite easily what you ought to do.

: Make you see things as they are.  
t~LkKo~o~spiritual friends L~O ~O~ ~Ok. S : Yes. Who know you well. Yes. : Who know you well.

"~ ~LAr S : Yes. Who might be able to see factors in your life you haven't

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S(ctd) : been able to see yourself.

Ann : That~what spiritual friends can do, rather than just offering advice and criticism.

I3t&~ S : Oh, yes. Advice is very easy to offer. ~I think what is much more helpful is to get together with someone and just talk over issues which need clarification and then the person~ can see for himself, for herself, what ought to be done. You don't need to tell them. But to give advice without helping to clarify the situation is perhaps really not very helpful. That person may follow it out of their blind trust in you, but I think it's better that you help them to clarify the situation so they can see for themselves or at least make a decision for themselves.

: They might become dependent.

S : Yes, quite. Sometimes people are too ready to hand out advice. I think I have mentioned this before.

~isk : Bhante, do you think of perception in terms of degrees of reality?

S : Certainly the sentence bears that interpretation or could bear that interpretation.

~rsk : Why is it hard? I mean, I know it's hard, but why?

S : Well, one might say the power of ignorance. Darkness, bewilderment, confusion and everything covered by the term ( ) ~o~Yc ~ot ~a habit of unclear thinking.

: Is it just your basic personality structure can't take that much (

S : It's not just your personality structure. I think it's more than that. I think it's your very nature as a conditioned being. Let's do just one more. "It is hard to perceive one's own



nature and (through such perception) to study the Way." Ah! What does that mean?  
To~trc~~s~~one' 5 own nature and through such perception to study the Way. own nature  
in what sense? If you are a greedy type or a hate type~in that sense?

: Maybe what sort of path we should follow. S : How would that  
help you to study the Way? To study the Way. : Perhaps that is the way to study.

i,'tr~CIVt S : Perhaps that is the way, to A one 5 own nature; but one's own nature in  
what sense?

: One's spiritual nature. The creative side of oneself.

S : To go deeper and deeper ir~one' S own nature5 to find onese~lf, one could say, is to  
f~6 the Way, but you have to go very deep indeed. It's a bit like what I was talking about  
ear]~on when you visualise the bodhisattva. You don't just see a figure outside of yourself,  
you find yourself on another level, a much deeper level. When you find the bodhisattva, you  
find yourself.

Noel : It's to do with realising your individuality.

Sc~ S : Yes, but though~certainly in the ordinary sense, not on the ordinary, so to speak,  
psychological~ev~~. One could even use the expression, your

true nature, except that it isn't traditionally very ~uddhistic, but

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S(ctd) : just take it in a loose sort of way.

: Bhante, in the Newsletter in which it talked about Tuscany they said they'd come back  
with a couple of things, and one of them was that you wanted to stress the Dharma (  
) it was psychological which was really good.

S : Yes. But it isn't enough to perceive one's own nature in a purely psychological  
senseTh~a~ne has certain conditionings and so on and so forth, or is of a certain  
temperament or has certain problems, but that isn't enough; you must go deeper than that, you  
must perceive your own nature as a spiritual be~ng, you must see, as it were, your  
Bodhisattva aspect, or, if you like, your true nature, even your 'true self' (again in inverted  
comma&). L Again, in India, it was quite noticeable that people didn't bave a psychological  
approach, especially, I would say, e5pecial~y"~~~r~der Members and mitra~s. In a sense  
they don~~ have psychological problems. in a sense they do, but they don't think in tho&e  
sort of terms. They approach the Dharma directly and by means Qf ~t approach they work, so  
to speak, from a ~harmic poin%+"o~vti~wb~%aft~~ on whatever problems they have, but  
they don~t work on them as problems, in a sense they don't work on them, they just practise  
the Dharma. That does the trick, that does the rest. It means, suppose~that someone has a

bad temper, he doesn't think in terms of 'I have a psychological problem because I have got a bad temper. How shall I get rid of it?' No, he is convinced anyway that Buddhism teaches, say, 'metta-bhavana', well, that's what you've got to get on with. So he gets on with it and so of course his psychological problem of having a bad temper is solved in the long run.

: Why do you think we have that tendency?

Wt AaV~ Lt S : Well, I suppose because in the West spiritual traditions collapsed largely over the last hundred or so years and something had to fill the gap. People have suffered mentally and they have gone to doctors who developed an interest in this sort of aspect of human illness. Doctors who became psychiatrists, psychotherapists, psychoanalysts, who've devised their own ways of dealing with these things, Some of which work, up to a point. So we've tended, in some quarters, to make almost a religion of, say, psycho-analysis, in the absence of anything better. But where there is an active spiritual tradition, those sort of disciplines, those sort of therapies are not needed. In a way, they incorporate them, though not in that particular way.

Noel : People go and visit their therapists, whereas in the days gone by they would've gone and seen the village priest.

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: Interesting, actually in Brighton there is a quite large alternative young population, who over the past years have been very involved in all sorts of personal growth kind of areas and they all seem to be drifting into more religious things.

S : Into the Centre? : Some of them,

or order? S : I wonder why they don't all drift into the Centre.

- other things -

S : Is it just that, do you think? : More tempting as well.

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S : More tempting in what way?

: I'm thinking about New Age groups, quite successful, wealthy, they're a closer network to get involved in.

S : A closer network? Well... S : More happy?

: More happy and more sort of positive response. It's easier to join in a group and become part of it.

S : Isn't it easy to join a meditation class? Or am I being naive?

: It doesn't feel so much like a group, does it? e2r~'%~s ~Cj : I think if people are looking for a group - the Rajrit~~sh people~~ill identify more w~~k ~group~.

: Also they offer classes such as Tantric techniques and bod~ awareness! We don't - ours quite so alluringly, you see.

Ann : I was thinking about that particular group because they seem to have made a big mistake in this particular phrase of discovering yourself, because one of the things they offer you is that you can do it instantaneously, all you've got to do is just do it and be yourself and you are there. And they don't appreciate that maybe the state you may reach is not the way.

S : You can't really do it like that. Well, in theory perhaps you can, but what you'll be is usually something that falls far short of yourself.

14~rien~ : I was reading a poster in our local library not so long ago for Transcendental Meditation and underneath it had the line: "No effort is required!"

C~rIo : Wonderful! : It doesn't involve a change of lifestyle. :  
Yes. S : You don't have to give up anything. Yes.

S : Well, one might say, well, is this justifiable as a sort of skilful means? Do they really believe that no effort is required? Or that you don't have to give anything up? Is it just a ploy?

You have to give up wrong effort. S ~e5!

Carla : It is a ploy, I think.

: They are only talking about a way, in the Transcendental thing, just sort of be more at peace with yourself, be more relaxed. That's what theyt.e~.~

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: People are into lots of different things these days.

Yes. But in the publicity, just to attract the general public they use a very sort of broad...

S Yes. But we know there is a very serious ethical question whether one should try to get people in by means of what is reallyj~alse appeal. For instance, an 'Enlightenment Weekend' ,~apparently seriously promised enlightenment in the course of the weekend. So is one justified

in getting people iT\to practise something just by making those sort of promises! It would seem not.

Ev~ : Because if you got anybody genuine, then they wouldn't come back, they?  
would

S : You mean they'd gain Enlightenment in the course of a weekend? f\VL  
: No, they wouldn't. They wouldn't go anywhere near things like that.

S : I believe~ in the States, some organisations give your money back guaranteed! So you go away thinking that you've gained Enlightenment.

: That's horrendous. : Do you get a certificate?

S Yes! I'm afraid we'll just have to plod along in our dull, old-fashioned FWBO way! But it's a pity that people get misled in this way. It really is a pity. A lot of sincere people get stuck in these sort of groups or in various churches.

A lot of people have come into the Friends through TM.

Dr ~s(. S : Yes, that's true. ~Or from, not so much through, but from. They've had a taste of meditation and finding that the TM people were unable to give them more, they just go looking and some of them come to us.

Carla : I wanted to learn medit~on for years but I never went to TM because they seemed to be a right rip~off~ and it was only when I finally encounte~ the LBC through a pamphlet ( ) that I actually finally went along. It was funny because I'd actually been interested for a long time and never seen a group that I was drawn to.

S : But I think, nonetheless, much as we may deplore the methods and approach of some of these other ~roups, we actually should take quite a hard look at our %~~daSppCA~ho~a0c~ an~ ask ourselves well, maybe could we not be quite positively a bit more colourful,~a bit more attractive?

: Skilful.

S : Skilful! Yes! We don't have to be sensational but we don't have to be fuddy-duddy either. Or seem to be. Do you see what I mean?  
Perhaps we are not just outward-going enough and lively enough.  
Perhaps we ought to recognise that and do something about it. Though as far as Brighton is concerned, with Devaraja, they probably think they are quite lively enough. But people must be able to see that they are or feel that they are as soon as they enter the Ce~t~~.  
Anyway, let's leave it at that, shall we?

(end of tape)

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S : Alright. Things that are hard, we're still on those. How far did we get?

Stephanie We'd got to number eighteen.

S : Did we do that? No.

S : "It is hard to help others towards Enlightenment according to their various needs." Well, why is it hard? What does it assume? What does it imply?

Stephanie That we don't know (what you really need?) Marlene : It implies that you really know them.

S : Yes. Well, first of all it implies that you have some experience, some spiritual experience yourself~ and then it implies that you are aware of what other people's needs actually are. That's very, very difficult to see, even, apparently, for a Buddha. I don't know if it was in this group that I referred to the incident of the Buddha teaching the meditation on death to people who, so to speak, didn't need that practice.

Carla : It's hard enough to help anybody on a very mundane level, much less on a spiritual level.

S : Yes. I think one's help should be as simple and basic as possible. You can't go far wrong if you provide someone with a meal or give them their bus fare. Unless they're going to commit a crime, of course. No, it isn't easy at all. It really needs a Bodhisattva to do that. "To help others towards Enlightenment according to their various needs." So how can one help? Can one help at all? In what way can one help? What is help? I mean, help doesn't mean telling people what to do. Sometimes people think it is.

Very often, if you're being yourself, if you're positive yourself, inspiring yourself, just getting on with your own spiritual life, one can help others, but, so to speak, indirectly. This (means?) being yourself in a truly spiritual sense, getting on with your own spiritual life, helping a~ contributing to the creation of a positive atmosphere. I wo~~ t say setting an example, that might be misunderstood. You can help others sometimes in that sort of way very much without perhaps realising it. People can be sometimes very moved, very inspired, by what you are doing without your knowing it, without your even thinking of them. People do see, they do take notice. There are various simple ways in which you can help. Sometimes you can help people by just listening to them.

Jan : It's quite an asset.

S : Some people are just desperate for a listen.

Carla : Listening is probably better than advice in almost any case.

S : Yes. If you listen really positively it helps the person concerned very often to clarify their own thoughts. Helps them to put their thoughts into some sort of order. Or helps them even to be conscious of~ thoughts, conscious of their desires, conscious of their wishes, conscious of all the~4~r't factors that are involved in whatever situation it is that they are talking about. I mean, sometimes one has the experience of just listening to someone and at the end of the session, so to speak, they say quite sincerely: "Well, this talk, this

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S(ctd) : discussion has really helped me." Perhaps you haven't said a word, but it's as though they've been given really good advice, but perhaps you haven't said anything at all, you just allowed them to clarify their own thoughts so they've been able to see things more clearly.

Punyavati : It's like acting as a mirror.

S : Right, yes. I think one should be careful not to be too prematurely sort of Bodhisattva-like, ~tv~~ing' around helping people. Otherwise you '(1 be like the Boy Scout who helped the old lady across the road. You know that one, don't you?

Yes. S : Do you know it, Sulocana?

Sulocana : No. What happened?

S : What happened? Well, the Boy Scout, as the custom is apparently, reported to his Scout master at the end of the day that he'd performed his good deed for the day. So the Scout master asked him: "Well, what did you do?" He said: "I helped an old lady cross over the road." And the Scout master said: 'Well, that's not much of a good deed. That must have been very easy.'" So he said: "Oh, no! It wasn't. She didn't want to cross the road." Maybe that sort of good deed is not being very Bodhisattva-like, not really 'helping' (in inverted commas) people to do things that they don't want to do. But you know some of the more forcible philanthropies of that nature. It doesn't mean persuading people or pressuring people.

Eve : Is it more encouraging?

S : Yes, ~I suppose even ther~you have to be a bit careful, because what are you encouraging them in? Maybe you should just be yourself, encouraging by your very nature, so that if they do want to do anyth~ng positive or skilful, well, the encouragement is there. If your encouragement is of a genuinely positive nature it will in fact encourage people to do only those things which are positive and skilful without your taking it upon yourself to advise them what is, in your opinion, the right thing to do etc. etc.

Carla : Very often just thinking of a person at an important time in their life, when they're going away or coming back from somewhere, or their birthday, or something like that, and wishing them well and letting them know that, I think are very important things to do.

S : Right.

Carla : Just to let them know that you actually care about them as human beings. It's a very simple, practical thing.

S : Almost irrespective of what they're doing. And of course, as you've just mentioned, one can help people very much just by thinking about them positively, just by developing metta towards them.

Elsie : Rejoicing in their merits.

S : Rejoicing in their merits too, yes indeed, and giving them appreciation. Sometimes, of course, one can help people by just keeping out of their way. Or rather, by not getting in their way. Sometimes people just need space and you can help them by giving them that space, or at least not taking away their space, not crowding their space. One might say that's a rather negative sort of help, but it's probably quite

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S(ctd) : important sometimes. People get in one another's way quite a lot, don't they? Just to stay out of other people's way is quite an achievement, so they're not always tripping over you or bumping into you.

Carla : It's an art on a retreat like this.

S : I didn't only mean it literally but even metaphorically. ~M~'tt goo~ Teresa : I find the five Tantric positive precept5~ about energy, not blocking other people. ... we were talking about these in the cafe and in fact most people could relate quite strongly to that in a situation where they were in very close touch with each other.

S : Yes. If you can't help other people, at least don't hinder them. Alright, let's go on to the next one: "It is hard to see the various phenomena without being moved by them." That's a bit akin to earlier sayings like: "It is hard to bear lust and desire (without yielding to them)," and "It is hard to see something attractive without desiring it," and "It is hard to bear insult without being angry." So here the saying is of a more general nature: "It is hard to see the various phenomena without being moved by them " \_\_\_\_\_ in one way or another. What does this mean? Or rather, what are the two extremes, so to speak, to be avoided in this connection?

Sulocana : What is wrong in being moved by seeing something?

S : Well, I suppose it depends on what one means by 'moved'. But here, I think, by 'mov~d~ they mean 'dist~r~d'. So what would one say, in that case, w~uL~~the two extremes to be avoided?

Jan : Being very upset.

S : Mm. Being upset, overwhelmed. And on the other hand, sort of holding yourself

rigid so as not to be affected. That would be the other extreme. No doubt one should not be moved by one's surroundings, but on the other hand, one should not fail to respond when necessary. Maybe 'unaffected' would be better than unmoved. It is hard to remain unaffected by one's surroundings. If one uses the word 'moved' in another sense, well, there are some occasions on which it is appropriate to be moved. You can be moved in the sense of inspired, or moved to sympathy. And if, of course, it is so very hard to remain unmoved by our surroundings, well, perhaps to begin with we should just make sure that the surroundings are of such a nature that we are moved in a positive manner.

Noel : I've just thought of another criticism that sometimes comes from outside and that is that Buddhists are indifferent, have an indifferent attitude towards ( ). In a way, unmoved, it's a bit like that.

S : Well, there is a difference, one might say, between indifference and equanimity. 'Upeksha', the fourth 'Brahmavihara', represents equanimity, not indifference. Equanimity isn't a state, say, that excludes metta. It's what you experience when you have metta and karuna and mudita equally towards all. So it's not that you put metta aside or go beyond metta; the metta is still there, in fact it's there in its fullness. You experience perfect metta, unlimited metta towards everybody, so there's no preference. You don't feel more metta towards one and less towards another. In that way, the mind becomes perfectly balanced and so you experience equanimity. It's not indifference. The metta is there, it's there more than ever. So one has to be careful what sort of language one uses.

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S(ctd) : I remember, in this connection, I was told a story by Lama Govinda. Lama Govinda told me that many years ago he attended an inter-faith conference in Italy. In fact I think it was in Rome. And some very high-powered Catholic people were there representing the Catholic church, theologians and bishops and maybe the odd cardinal or two. And representing Buddhism there was Lama Govinda himself and a very nice, young, but rather naive Nepalese Buddhist Theravada monk. So, a discussion arose in one of the sessions about love. So I think the young monk was asked what Buddhists thought about love and he said, well, according to Buddhism, indifference ranked much higher than love. So Lama Govinda said that when the young monk said that smiles of satisfaction went round the Catholic representatives as if to say: "Well, yes, that's what we've always said. Buddhism is cold, selfish, indifferent. It ranks indifference higher than love." So Lama Govinda said he couldn't let that pass, so he got up to explain that the young monk, though he did know his Buddhism quite well, was not a perfect master of the English language, and that what he really meant was not indifference but equanimity, that equanimity was higher than love. And then he went on to explain that equanimity included love, was the fullness of love and then, of course, the smiles left the faces of the Catholic representatives. But it shows how careful you have to be with words. So, indifference is not a virtue in Buddhism. Equanimity is a virtue, but equanimity does not exclude love, metta. Equanimity is possible only when there is the fullness of metta. I think that's a very important point. So you might say that in the case of Buddhism, it's not that you should love people less, in order to get rid of your attachments. You should love people more. Love more people, develop metta towards more people. It's all right to speak of getting rid of attachments, but what does that really mean? Instead of being fond of just a few people, you should be fond of a lot of people, of everybody. I mean, a



friend of mine in India, who at th~ttime had his own sort of spiritual group, used to say to me: "Well, what is this talk of detachment, detachment?" He said: "People shouldn't think in terms of detachment, they should think in terms of attachment. You should be attached to what is skilful, attached to what is good, attached to the ideal. Not just think in negative terms in terms of detachment." So, in the same way, of love perhaps it's taking the wrong approach to say: "Oh no. You shouldn't be attached, give up love etc. etc." and speak more in terms of broadening it. It's not a question, say, of not loving your family. You don't want to confine your love or restrict your love to your family. You don't achieve equanimity by ceasing to love your family, say; you attain equanimity by loving all the people you come into contact with as much as you love the members of your family. Which of course is a pretty tall order. But still, the approach here is positive, or should be positive rather than negative. Not to give up what little love you do have, but to try to increase it, try to expand it, so as to include everybody.

Trish : So it's sort of, like, instead of not being ~m"oved, it's more like you respond in a positive way? S : Respond in a positive way to everybody. everybody's Every~o., ~y~suffe~s, needs. Well, yes, that's quite a tall order, <respond by being yourself. It's not that you're called upon to do anything specific, necessarily, or to give advice. But I think surroundings here means our material surroundings. It's not easy to be unaffected by our material surroundings. I think people in the FWBO are becoming more and more aware of this, aren't they? I mean as regards their immediate surroundings, their particular flat or their community house. Surroundings do affect you. If your surroundings are dingy, dirty, derelict, decrepit, degenerat~L~~ deteriorating. It does affect you in the ~ng ru~, doesn't it? And if they are damp and

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S (ctd) : dirty and dismal~ Well, it does affect you, doesn't it? Unless you're really a Bodhisattva, or immersed in constant meditation. You may not even notice that they are affecting you. You may have become dull and disheartened as well. Not to say dejected! It would be very much to your detriment and disadvantage, so that you end up as daughter of disaster rather than daughter of delight! But I mean, some people have been doing really spectacular things lately, like buying curtains and things like that, to brighten their abode. And yes, ~t is entirely positive. I quite agree with it. One shouldn't live in a squalid sort of way, that isn't spiritual. Austerity, yes, simplicity, yes, but beauty at the same time. I think one can very well take a leaf out of the Zen people~5 book here. One of the things I said when Vajraloka was started was that it be very, very simple but very clean, white and attractive in a sort of Zen style. Zen in inverted commas, of course. But do you know what I mean? That is how it is, isn't it? It's clean. It's a bit stark, but it is attractive at the same time. There's nothing cluttered, nothing in the way of unnecessary ornament, at least there wasn't last time I w£Mt there. Colours affect you, don't they? Different colours. Presence or absence of light affects you.

Punyavati : And smells.

S : Smells, yes. I noticed that in India. It was pretty dreadful quite often. Some places ~~~sited Cn j~idt'~ , some of those railway towns:cffa~ theyi~~~e unutterably awful, indescribably awful. Except the atmospher~ which I may have mentioned in my talk. Sometimes they were quite beautiful, the sunsets through the smog, beautiful pinks and greens. Otherwise, well, people shouldn't really be living under those circumstances, they shouldn't. It was really so dreadful, and it culminated almost in driving out of one particular railway town which was really unutterably awful. We drove out through very, very heavy traffic, a sort of mixture, a jam, of traffic. We drove out and there were sort of stalls at the side of the road selling foodstuffs, and petrol fumes and clouds of dust blowing right over them, over the exposed foodstuffs which were just being sold to passers-by. And then we came to, believe it or not, well, what on earth was it? There were thick clouds of dust everywhere and I've forgotten now, something was being manufactured or baked or something, but anyway, there were great piles of... yes, that's right, lime was being burnt, there were great hills, mountains of lime, all smouldering and smoking and there were scores of half-naked figures amidst all this carrying b~~kets of the stuff to and fro. You could just see them through the clouds of dust and they were working in that all day in the hot sun on the outskirts of that really dreadful town. So what sort of life is this for human bein~ What sort of effect must it be having on them? In the same way, looking at the other side of the picture, if you're in the countryside surrounded by beautiful grass and flowers and trees, it does have an effect on you. It does have a positive effect. Environment is important, surroundings are important. Certainly o~~' 5 immediate surroundings, one's own room. I think there's been a general upgrading of communities, large and small in this respect, over the last year or so. We've been doing our best at Padmaloka in this respect. Not with complete success, but anyway. As someone said, it's a question of money. No doubt a few more improvements will be made.

Ann : It's very important as well that if you.... people can usually see that if you meditate, it's really lovely to have a beautiful shrine room, but then you dt(W~et want to completely lose that when you come out. I've quite often seen~in houses~there's been a beautiful shrine room and the rest of the house has been... it's like you step out of the shrine room back into the ordinary mundane life and states of mind.

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S : Mm. Well, the attitude of the Zen people is that the whole monastery should be like a shrine. So one could apply that to the whole community building. It's said, I don't know how true this is, probably there's some truth in it, that whenever a Zen master went to inspect a Zen monastery, ~ust to see how they were getting on, it was said h"e'~~oked in two places. He examined the shrine to see how beautifully it was kept and he examined the toilets. If they were all right, if they were both spotlessly clean etc, he didn't look any further. So, I mean, every room should be kept like a shrine, in a way. I mean, not that every room necessarily has lots of Buddha images and all that sort of thing, but it's kept with the same care, the same attention, well, the same love, if you like, as the shrine is kept, the same meticulousness.

Trish : In Buddhism colours have different associations with qualities too.

S : Yes. It differs a bit from one tradition to another, but broadly speaking in, say,

the Vajrayana white is, of course, associated with purity, that's universal. Yellow is associated with growth and maturation and ripening and prosperity and success. Red is associated with love and warmth and passion and fire and fascination and attraction. Green is associated, I think, although this is not so definite, more with mystery, with death. We would ~d in this country perhaps to associate green with rest, with repose. It's also associated with union of opposites because green is the product of blue and yellow, isn't it? The blue of the sky and the yellow of the earth. Green is also regarded as a sort of androgynous colour because if blue, the sky, represents the masculine and yellow, the earth, represents the feminine, well, green is the blending of the two. It's the harmony of opposites. So there are these sort of associations. And then, of course, blue is the sky, blue is truth. Deep blue is the Absolute, the midnight sky. So there are these sort of associations with colours. But on a more sort of psychological level green is restful, isn't it? And red is stimulating. If you are a rather dull, sluggish sort of person it~ 5 better if your room is decorated in stimulating colours with, for instance, red or pink or orange. But if you're a rather excitable person then green is good, blue is good. I think one can experiment, one can feel the effect of different colours upon oneself. I don't know whether, in the case of women, they feel in a different mood according to the colour of the dress they wear. Is that so, would you say?

Vo;ce~ : Yes.

S : In what sort of way? Supposing you dress all in white, how do you feel?

Elsie : Well, I feel sort of light and spring-like. I always dress myself in white.

S : Ah! Because white in the East, in many Buddhist countries, is the 'upasaka' and 'upasika' colour and the women wear white. In India white saris on fL&~1 wLOo~ c&a~ an~ so O~. At many of the meetings at which I gave lectures in India recently, there were rows and rows of ladies waiting to welcome me with rose petals and so on, all wearing white saris. Sometimes a couple of hundred of them lined up in two rows. I had a letter not so long ago, which was just a little addendum to my visit, that Lokamitra had heard that in the towns that I'd visited and given lectures in, there were complaints from the shopkeepers afterwards that they'd not been warned about my lecture, because there had been an enormous demand from the ladies for white saris and they'd run out of white saris and if they'd known in time they'd have stocked up with them! That's the traditional ( ) of white saris.

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S(ctd) : WhataLoiC~~~earing other colours? Anybody have any experience?

Trish : I know that if I'm feeling particularly sort of bright and energetic I wear red and yellow. L'S~~ ~k~rt ~

S : There's quite a bit of redj~being worn around, well, certainly around the LBC these days. Even some of the men, there's a touch of red.

Marlene : Someone told me recently that they'd noticed that before Mairi was born I used to wear lots of blues and that after she was born I suddenly started wearing~ lot of red

S : And you don't think it was just coincidence?

Marlene : No, I don't.

S : Was that maternal warmth, perhaps? Has anyone noticed this, or have you not noticed it at all?

Teresa : I find it changes with the seasons too.

S Yes, because the seasons affect you too, don't they? In some cultures, I think the ancient Chinese especially, you dressed according to the season. Not just with regard to the thickness or texture of clothing, but even the colours and patterns that gave expression to your sense of harmony with nature.

Punyavati : Also they chose the colours according to the occasion. At some times it has to be toned down so you would choose appropriate colours. It was like that when we used to do the saris. And for weddings you can really splash out. And it depends on whom you are meeting as well. I suppose I feel that it does have an effect on your emotionality or expressing your own personality through your clothes and your bearing.

S Yes, right. Well, there are all sorts of jokes, whether rightly based or not, I don't know, about a new frock giving a woman confidence. All that sort of thing. Maybe it's not a question just of the new frock but maybe a particular colour, ~Dwtetints.

Stephanie : It can work the other way actually. I find, if I'm a bit nervous, I'll often want to wear something that I've worn a lot of times because I know who I am in that.

S : Or maybe the old dress is like an old friend.

Sulocana : I used to have a terrible time being dressed up by my mother because I felt so terrible being what she thought I was.

S : Well, that's a different sort of thing, isn't it? When you're not allowed to express what you feel you are.

Sulocana : She used to make things all the time, even when I was quite old. She would make me a dress and then be really hurt because I couldn't bring myself to wear it and it wouldn't be at all what I would feel like. So I think it's that way round. One expresses how one feels with the choice of the dress rather than being affected by the dress one has on.

S : Or one reinforces how one feels.

Stephanie : I went through a phase when I was so preoccupied by what I wanted to wear I would get up in the morning and after I'd meditated I would sometimes go and change again because I really knew what I felt like that day and I wanted to wear that thing. In fact it got so

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Stephanie(ctd) : complicated that now when I go away I just take two... the very minimum because if y,o~get too involved in what you wear it can get very complicated.

S : Well, you1d need a very extensive wardrobe for that!

Stephanie : There's so many choices of colours and styles.

S : Combinations of things.

Stephanie : It can go against the simple life, actually, if you get too tied up. I've found that.

S : Anyway, we do seem on the whole to be wearing somewhat brighter colours,~ in the Movement, well, over the years anyway, over the last five or ten years. I remember in the case of the first batch of ordinations, everyone agreed that they would wear, after consulting among themselves, either a dark suit or a dark frock! At that time~~t was considered to be appropriate. And in the photographs, or slides rather, that we still have of the occasion, the first batch of Order Members are wearing dark suits and dark frocks. It would be considered distinctly odd now, wouldn't it? So surroundings are important,at least in the beginning. They do have an effect upon you. You feel different~in the city ~~cL in the countryside, don't you, usually? Sometimes you feel more lively in the city, but also more distr~lcted. Perhaps you feel calmer and quieter in the country, but possibly<~r'om time to time, more cow-like! Well, it works both ways, there's a positive and a negative aspect.

Liz : I'm just asking if that's a comment about me? I'm feeling slightly cow-like!

S : Well, no comment!

Sulocana : It can have a calming effect if one is too excited.

S : Yes. And some people need to go to the city perhaps to be a bit stimulated. Others need to come to the country to be quietened down a bit. There again, one is just working on this general principi~of surroundings being important. You're affected by surroundings, so you choose your surroundings, if you possibly can, in accordance with the sort of way in which you think you should be affected or the sort of way in which it would be desirable for you to be affected. Possibly, in the case of most people, the combination of city and countryside, that is to say, alternating between them from time to time, is quite desirable. If you normally live in the country, well, by all means just go and spend time in the city, just occasionally and vice versa. It probably makes for a more balanced life. Alright, the last one. "It is hard to understand the proper use of skilful means (for teaching and practising the Dharma)." Well, this is, in a way, a variant of: "It. is hard to help others theirV7nr~e%~s.~~ towards Enlightenment according to You are familiar with this conception of skilful means in the Mahayana? 'Upayakausalya.' As when the elder in the parable in the 'White Lotus Sutra' lures his children out of the burning house with the help of skilful means. So, a sort of spiritual tact.

Trish : I'd sort of understood it more that our understanding wasn't all that clear, so sometimes the means wasn't very succinct. The distractions we placed in( )  
c?¼

S : I think the important thing in teaching and practising the Dharma,

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S(ctd) : as regards skilful means and especially as regards communicating with other people, is that you just try to be as direct and honest and try to keep as much in touch with your own experience, your own personal understanding, as you possibly can. And skilful means does not consist in a sort of trick or ploy or game or technique or anything of that sort. It's nothing to do with winning friends and influencing people.

Teresa : What about advertising the Dharma? In a way you can use that. The way people see the media, to attract people and you can use... it's open to quite a wide use.

S Well, it can be used skilfully. I'm sure it can be used unskilfully, even with regard to the Dharma.

(end of side one)

S : We mustn't forget sometimes, the medium is the message. Maybe an outdated phrase, but still it's a useful one.

Teresa : Ah, so the medium has to be skilful.

S : Well, the medium is the message, or at least a good part of the message, at least sometimes. So that you must be aware of the medium you are using, the effect it is producing. Otherwise the message of the medium will contradict the message that the medium is supposed to be communicating.

Teresa : I sometimes find that in a social situation/that you want to put people at their ease, but you also want to go further with them.

S : Well, you have to start by putting them at their ease. I've been quite interested in some of our visual advertising. It's been quite interesting to observe or to get reports of the effects, the success even, of different types of advertising, different types of posters and so on.

I mean, the egg poster seems to have been especially successful. It's so simple, it's so meaningful and it's non-specific. It's just this idea of breaking out of the egg, breaking out of your shell. It has no explicit association with Buddhism and that helps. This is just liberation, freedom. It's very, very good. It's got it, well, in a nutshell or in an eggshell~ and it seems to have worked. Yet some posters I haven't liked very much. I felt they were a bit vulgar. I don't know whether that's my conditioning, but that's what I felt with some of them. For instance, I remember I saw some when I was up in Glasgow, this is some years ago, there was one, for instance, what was it? It showed a beach and I think a stout man, I think it was, lying on his stomach on the beach and a stout, not to say very stout, lady sitting by him and she was using his back as a sort of table to write a postcard saying something like, well, 'Come to the retreat on such and such a date.' This seemed to me a bit crude. Apparently it did bring people in.

Marlene : It also put some people, who had been coming, put them off.

S : Yes. One needs to be very aware of the effect one's medium - iS having.

Jan : The egg one has been copied by another advertiser, which is quite interesting. An indication of its effects.

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S : What sort of advertiser? Jan : Well, a car. BMW cars. S :  
Ah, yes. Teresa : Ah, the Japanese...

Jan : They've got the egg thing done in black and white. I mean, it's obviously taken from the idea, from that poster.

S : Are we suing for a million pounds? ~Why not?

Marlene : We found a strange effect, well, it seemed to me a strange effect.  
There was one poster which was used in Glasgow which had the face of the Buddha on it and that brought people in, but we found that they were also torn, the ones that were up in the street, people used to tear them across the face. St~~~~A

S : Yes. There were other posters, I remember. I for et~ exactly what they were posters for, in the sense of what vent or course. I thought they were rather good. They showed faces, heads, I think they were heads of film stars, maybe old ones.

Jan : Mm. Humphrey Bogart.

Marlene : And Marlene Dietrich.

S : But I thought actually these were quite well done. It made a good use of those images. But apparently some people objected quite strongly,

on even violently, some of our friends, to that type of advertising. Not grounds of vulgarity. I don't know on what grounds at all. They just felt a bit disturbed by it for some reason or other.

Jan : Associations, maybe.

S : I forget what the letter said, but it was quite clear.

Marlene : It said, the one for Marlene Dietrich said 'For Women' and the one for Humphrey Bogart said 'For Men'. And there was a third one which I didn't like. It had a cowboy, sort of standing, and it said 'For Heroes' across the front.

S : Was there one for heroines?

Marlene : No!

S : Maybe... who were the film stars?

Jan : Marlene Dietrich and Humphrey Bogart.

S : Maybe people found it difficult to identify with them.

Teresa Or maybe it was seeing a woman as a stereotype as portrayed by that particular film star and they didn't want to be identified with that image.

S : Perhaps regarded it as something unattainable. Reactions were quite strange which was interesting. What else have we had?

What have we had in London recently? :  
The sunglasses.

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S : Oh, the sunglasses. The summer retreat. That was quite ingenious, wasn't it?

Teresa : But a lot of people expected something different. I think it was the wording.

Jan : I think the 'Change Things' was better.

S : What did....

Teresa : They thought they'd have lots of long walks in the country and that it was near the sea. Well, it was near the sea but they thought it was going to be time on the beach.

S : Ah, you see, again, the medium is the message. The medium that got



across                                was the sunglasses.

Stephanie        :        Summer holidays.

S        :        Summer holiday, that was the message, although that wasn't the message you wanted to communicate. So you see how careful one has to be.

Jan        :        That's why I think the 'Change Things' was quite good. The one with the mask.

S                    Ah, what was that?

Jan        :        It's just like a face and a mask and it just says 'Change Things' underneath, which is quite appropriate.

Carla        :        I quite liked Asvajit asleep on the chair with the party hat on.  
:        That was for a Christmas retreat. 'Do Something Different.'

Carla        :        'Do Something Different This Christmas.' He was asleep with a party hat on. That was really good.

Jan        :        That got quite a lot of response.        Carla        :        That was a year ago, eighteen months ago.

Vajragita        :        I heard it also had a strong more negative thing, not wanting to have Christmas that way, but not really wanting to meditate either.

S        :        So I think one has to examine first of all the explicit message of one's advertising, let's say, and the implied message of the medium itself, of the visual element perhaps in your advertising.  
Well, how did we get onto that? Skilful means. The emphasis here being on skilful. You may think that you are being really clever, but you may come a cropper. You might have been very clever but not very skilful.

Stephanie        :        To me this is connected with the eighteenth one about 'helping others according to their various needs' ~ because I think if you do ever stray into the area of skilful means, you might be trying to slightly cloud an issue for somebody, ostensibly for their own good, but you don't necessarily know what's for their own good.

S                    Mm. Yes.

Teresa        :        Why does it say 'practising'?

S        :        Well, that's the bit in brackets. That's added presumably by the translator. I would say it would apply to teaching rather than to

S(ctd) : teaching and practising. Because usually one speaks of the Bodhisattva's 5 skilful means, that is, the sort of archetypal skilful means. Well, skilful means, 'upaya kausalya', is one of the ten paramitas, isn't it? one of the four, as it were, supplementary paramitas. So there, it is very clearly the skilful means employed by the ~~~~c ed Bodhisattva in leading s~tient beings into the Way. So I think 'and practising' is not really appropriate here. But, I mean, if one is trying to be skilful, one must be sure one is really being skilful and, as I said, not just clever, not to say clever -clever. A lot of things convey a message without our being aware of it. As we were discussing a few minutes ago, even the way you dress conveys a message; presumably even your hairstyle does. So perhaps one needs to be aware of that.

Eve : I think it's good to be aware of it, but not be obsessed by it.

S : Well, no.

Eve : In the sense of caring too much how you appear.

S : But if you want to communicate you must be aware that there are other elements which are in fact communicating but which are perhaps not under your control, and they may be working against your conscious intention. ~il Trish : I was talking to Tony down at Hockney~ and he said he'd gone~around - the various restaurants in London looking at how people sold things and discovered that abundance and green really attracted people to buy so

S : Well, as someone commented, apropos of this, no-one would ever eat food which was coloured blue. It might be perfectly good, but if you put a blue dye into it... For instance~you see little sweet cakes with icing on and the icing is never blue. But why shouldn't it be blue? For some reason, there is very little in Nature of an edible nature which is blue and people are not accustomed to eating things blue. Yellow, yes. Butter is yellow. Red, yes. Meat is red. White, yes. What is white? Fat is white. Green. Grass is green, vegetables are green. But blue, no. At the most, little veins of blue in blue cheese, but nothing more than that. So ~lue is not used.

: It's the colour of decay. S : Decay, yes.

Trish We did try making this trifle. It had blue and yellow custard. It did sell, but then there was quite a lot of comment about it.

S : What sort of, coming nearer home, what sort of message do you think the d~cor etc. of the 'Cherry Orchard' communicates? Or what message do you want it to communicate, those of you who are involved in it at the Centre?

Trish : Well, it's quite fresh and spring-like. S : Spring-like. Jan : Yes. It's quite expansive and quite sort of cool. S : Cool. Jan : Yes, cool in a clear sort of way. S : Well, the colour is pink which is slightly stimulating.

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Jan : Pink and green. I think it's the combination. And the white. S  
 ~~~ o~ ""~5~~ ~o >O't t~'~nk °'~ ~si~~~~~t~6 ~ loca p~o~iL? Elsie : They like it  
 actually. I've met a few and they seem to think it's very sort of friendly and fresh and
 bes~v~i~~, and the garden especially.

Teresa : I think they pick up that we care about what we do.

S : Mm. Well, that is~i'm~ortant with all the little businesses in the area.

Teresa : But a lot, I think, '~~~on't come in. S : Why is that?

Teresa : For some reason, I think, they think it's not for them.

S : Ah. So, in other words, it is perhaps communicating a message you
 don't intend to communicate. So what do you think that might be?

Teresa : I suppose, well, it might be a class thing, t'd%st'~i~~ S
 : In what way, in what sense could it be a class thing? Jan : It is
 out of character with the East End sort of area. Ann : It's quite smart, isn't it?
 S : It's not over smart. Jan : No, it's not over smart. S
 : It's not aggressively smart, anyway.

Teresa : I think, maybe, actually, it's a sense of space because too if it's
 chock-a-block full of people it's almost like people are ~ore attracted to come
 in. I'm thinking of the other caf~s in the area. They often, well, you are crammed up next to
 everybody else and it's quite sort of intimate.

Stephanie : I wonder if they feel it's a group, that it's not really open to the public in some
 way. That the people who are in there know each other. They don't want to invade. They
 might feel outsiders to it.

Trish : It does have that young, alternative, slightly hippyish feel to it.

Stephanie : And being next to the Centre.

Noel : And if word gets around that it's vegetarian, well, that's a () for a start. If you
 don't recognise what it is that people are eating and you're not even sure what you're going to
 ask for, you have to come in and decide. ...

S : Ah, yes. Maybe it would be a good idea to sort of have the menu up
 outside.

Teresa : We do. In the window.

S : Ah. Does it work?

Teresa : We do get local people in, you know.

S : But characteristically local people, would you say? No.

Noel : They're expecting hamburgers and chips.

Carla : You do get some characteristic local people in from the hospital who come in and think that the food is going to help them, because you actually get quite a lot of the staff of the hospital coming in.

S : Ah, good. Perhaps they recommend it.

Carla : I'm not sure, but you do get quite a lot of these ~,ns~ VI r£j~(&rI~.

Trish : Well, the lady in the laundrt~mat was asking me what cakes we had and what do we eat. And she'd been into a vegetarian restaurant once and they'd made her eat just nuts!

S : One has been into those sort of places and come out feeling very, very heavy! But it illustrates how important communication is and one must be aware of what it is that you are doing, what it is that you are in fact communi~'cating. It isn't just a matter of the words.

Teresa : I suppose I've been thinking if we had more signs up explicitly outside saying what we sold.

S : Or k'Welcome'. Or 'Open to the public'! Teresa : Right. Jan : 'This means you! Teresa : We do seem to have a non-public front. S : Yes. Slightly sort of private club Noel : Did you ever put anything in the East End News? Teresa : Yes, we did.

Elsie : It's easy to identify us as a Buddhist group. Even one morning I was going to work and I met this little girl and she said: "Oh, you are working in the Buddhist thing." They do see it as... it's just for Buddhists and vegetarians.

S : Anyway, let's go on, shall we? We've spent quite a lot of time on those 'hard' things. Would someone like to read fourteen?

Teresa . "A Sramana asked the Buddha: "By what method can we attain knowledge of our previous lives and come in contact with the Way?" The Buddha answered: "By purifying the mind and preserving the will (to struggle onwards) you can come in contact with the Way just as, when a mirror is wiped, the dust falls off and the brightness remains. By eliminating desires and seeking for nothing (else), you should be able to put a stop to life (in the phenomenal sphere)."

S : What about this question of knowledge of previous lives and coming into contact with the Way? You notice that the Buddha ignores part of the question.

: Yes. That's right, yes.

Carla : He ignores the first half as if it's irrelevant.

S : But does he think it's irrelevant, do you think?

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Elsie : He speaks of what is useful to the person that asks.

S : Mm. He speaks of what is more important.

Sulocana : The different aims really.

S : Yes. It says: "By purifying the mind and preserving the will" (that is to struggle onwards) "you can come in contact with the Way." This preserving the will to struggle onwards. Keeping up your efforts. It is very easy to make an effort for just a short time and then just slacken off. The Buddha is, as it were, emphasising that the struggle must be maintained. But I think this is something that very often happens, that people very often do make an effort, quite a sincere effort, but then they just sort of slacken off and it's as though sometimes, by their own unmindful behaviour they undo the effects of their previous efforts. Have you ever noticed that? They don't conserve their spiritual gains, so to speak, they dissipate them, they fritter them away or allow them to be frittered away.

: Does that mean that you should try from time to time to remember what it was that set you off in the first place?

S : Yes, yes. Well, the sort of thing I'm thinking of happens very often, I think, with people after a retreat. They get into quite a good state on the retreat, but they are not careful enough to guard it when they leave the retreat. Maybe they feel in a very positive mood so they go straight off and do something silly, and they blow their positive mood.

Sometimes a bit if you feel very positive ~~~ you're not careful you become unmindful. You get over-excited and then you're likely to go and do something silly.

Stephanie : Do you mean you go out and do something that disturbs your state of mind so you start to sort of get into a bit of a downward spiral?

S : Yes. For instance, when you go off a retreat you must be mindful of the sort of state that you are in. If, for instance, you are in a sensitive state, it would be foolish to go into a situation of a very crude kind perhaps, which would affect you much more and much more negatively just because you are in a sensitive state and just come off a retreat. I mean, for instance, to give you an example, suppose you have been to Vajraloka for a week and maybe you come back to London and you go straight into a busy co-op meeting. That is not the sort of thing you

should do. Or go and see a 'Superman' film, that's not the sort of thing either. It's too jarring. It's too much of a shock and it dissipates whatever you have gained during your retreat. I mean, ideally, when you get back from a retreat, you should just go to your own room, just settle in quietly, just sit a while, just be quiet and mindful, keep in touch with whatever you have. And in the course of the retreat. Be careful you do not lose it, and as long as you can. I don't mean hold on to it in a possessive sort of way, I just mean remain positive for as long as you can and ward off anything that threatens that positivity.

Trish : Bhante, sometimes after a longer retreat I've found it quite difficult driving afterwards.

S : Ah. Well, one can find a lot of things difficult after a long retreat. Going back into the city itself one can find difficult. Even talking to people one can find difficult. Writing letters.

Noel : Meeting the children again:

Jan : That must be really hard.

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Carla : Taking them on the Underground across London to get home.

S : But this is where you need to be aware of the likelihood of your positivity being affected. Do you see what I mean?

Carla : And if you go together actually. If you always travel home with others who have been on the retreat, it makes such a difference to stay together till you're almost home.

S : I'll tell you something that some people have mentioned, at least I've heard the men mention it, I don't know whether this applies to women too, it probably does. They've sometimes said, in fact several people have said that when you leave the retreat, be very careful about hitching back because you can get landed with someone who no doubt very kindly has offered you a lift, but who just wants to talk. And about all sorts of things in which you just are not in the least interested, especially after having just been on retreat. Have you ever felt that?

Punyavati : Yes. () mentioned that after a long retreat, when they had hitched back, they've had pretty nasty experiences and I find most women don't do that now. Recently I haven't seen anyone do that. ~M~ o~t~oS~ Jan : Or coming back from Vajraloka on the coach, if you get a driver who plays awful rock music really loud. It's really dreadful.

Stephanie : I hitched back from a retreat with Marion and I think it's easier if you

hitch back with someone else because you kind of protect each other. But we hitched back from Vajraloka together and we practically fell in love with the people we hitched back with, they were so wonderful. Everyone seemed incredibly nice, because we were feeling so good and it wasn't sort of too immediate, ba~a~s~ ~,ere ~~re two ~~

S : There were two of you.

Stephanie : Yes. I think it makes a lot of difference if there are two of you.

Vajragita : I was surprised how, travelling back, there were lots of people very positive - carrying my suitcase.

Trish : We were talking to the cab driver who drives people up to Vajraloka, Bhante, and he said he liked driving the women up because he thought the men somet~mes just got ;~t~ the back of the cab and didn't say anything and they were very... whereas the women were much more friendly.

Vajragita : I've had several life stories of cab drivers in Norwich!

S : Anyway, how did we get or~to that? Oh yes. From preserving the will to struggle onwards; trying to prolong the, in this case, retreat experience as much as you possibly can.

Punyavati : It's like, in a way, keeping life as simple as possible afte each retreat, going back to a more simple life. One thing I have been thinking about as well, it comes up here, is that by di~sipating that which you had gained on the retreat, is when I put pressure on myself during the retreat I find when I do go back there is no positive feeling to actually maintain the things I have gained on the retreat. But if it's done in a less sort of disciplinarian way and I think about it and actually try to cultivate myself then it' S easier to carry them on after the retreat.

S : The same principle holds good with regard, say, to one's morning meditation. I've spoken about this sort of thing in several commun~t~es, hut I've not~ced that people finish the morning meditation

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S(ctd) : and come straight out of the shrine room and at once start talking about all sorts of things~which seems so strange and so, in a way, very sad that almost at once you start dissipating whatever you've gained from the meditation. One should come out quiet and mindful and stay a bit quiet as long as you can. Otherwise I've seen people coming straight out of the door and at once just start chatting or chattering like little magpies.

Stephanie : It's important to have space, actually, to have a bit of free time, because I've found when I've been very busy, I've had to rush off to the next activity, ~oming off retreat o~ coming out of meditation, and so you don't even both~r to try and hold on~o it because

you know that within two minutes you'll be driving a van or at the bus stop or in the Underground.

S : Yes. You must, it seems, if you possibly can, allow breaks in between those different sorts of activities so that you have time to adjust properly. Otherwise, if you don't have time to adjust, well, you're performing the next set of actions, so to speak, in a state of mind which is quite inappropriate to them and therefore you're sort of alienated. You must give yourself time to make that transition in between. And that means you must be considerate in your dealings with other people in this respect too~ ~nd give them time to make any necessary transition. So, the Buddha uses, or makes, a comparison here:" B purifying the mind and preserving the will (to struggle onwards) you can come in contact with the Way just as, when a mirror is wiped, the dust falls off and the brightness remains. By eliminating desires and seeking for nothing (else), you should be able to put a stop to life (in the phenomenal sphere)". Do you think this sort of approach represents a skilful means so far as most people are concerned? Speaking in terms simply of eliminating desire and not seeking ()? It does seem that people usually respond better to a more positive approach. Sometimes one must have to speak in terms of eliminating desires, but perhaps that shouldn't be one's overall approach. So that, for example, one shouldn't speak in terms of eliminating desires and nothing else. Anyone have any experience in connection with this?

Ann : It often seems easier if you want to stop something which is quite negative, rather than just trying to stop it, to cultivate other positive things and then you find ~' 5 just sort of vanished of its own accord.

S : Well, after all, you can't really get rid of ignorance without learning something.

Elsie : That's a point!

S : It isn't as though ignorance is there like a great big black lump to be got rid of.

Liz : It often seems people get more caught up in the act of trying to deny themselves something, rather than being more positive.

S : Yes. And even such phraseology as "putting a stop to life", even if you add in brackets "in the phenomenal sphere", well, it doesn't help all that much, it does sound a bit negative or one might say life-denying. No doubt the word 'life' needs definition or re-definition. I think one needs to be very careful in the West at least of using this sort of phraseology, "putting a stop to life"; it doesn't make Buddhism sound very attractive or inspiring.

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: Answering the Sramana' 5 question when it says about attaining knowledge of previous lives by saying, well, don't bother about that, you can put a stop to that.

S : Right. Put a stop to this life too and to future ones! Well, supposing you were to give a talk on Buddhism, say in schools, advising everybody to eliminate their desires, not to seek for anything and

assure them that if they did this they would really be able to put a stop to life! Well, what sort of impression~w~~~~hat give? Although, in a sense, well, I won't say it's true, there is some truth in it. Certainly it is an aspect of spiritual life, depending on how you define these various terms. 'Desires', well, 'cravings' would be a better term here~and 'put a stop to life'? Well, put a stop to reactive existence or reactivity would be better, not life, because that word has got quite a rich meaning in English.

Carla : Perhaps it wouldn't be too much to go so far as to say neurotic craving even.

S : Neurotic, well... Carla : Do you think? Or is that too much?
S : Well, no, I think that... Carla : All craving is...

S : I think that suggests there are cravings that are therefore quite acceptable. No, neurotic desires, I think, or ~ust cravings.

Carla : Neurotic desires. Trish : It does to me conjure up images of sinning. S : Does it? Oh, I hadn't noticed but perhaps it does. Trish : Well, eliminating desires. S : Yes. Carla : Oh yes, lust. S : Well, no. Lust is to be eliminated according to Buddhism. Carla : Well, desire sounds, conjures up lust.

S : Desire is too comprehensive a term to be just negated. I mean 'desire' can be used in a highly positive sense,

Vajragita : It does sometimes feel a bit like, that when you have a good meditation, you d~n~t have desires () S : Right.

tp1~~ Noel : Well, presumably the sramana who asked the question felt~knowledge of previous lives would demonstrate the laws of conditionality.

S : Yes,tAej~w~karma.

Noel : And the Buddha is saying, well, you can see it here and now without having to go into those things.

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S : Right. Yes. Indeed. The general principle seems to be that a positive approach is always better, or at le than a purely negative one so far as Bu0~dh4ls"r~~A~~s~fcfhT&erne.' ~btherwise people may think that Buddhism is i~~e or less just giving up smoking, giving up eating meat, or not doingLthe things you like doing. a I

Eve : Whereas in fact it can show the shortcomings of~those things

S : Shows you something very much better than all those things.
Something even more enjoyable, even more delightful.

Eve : How nice it would be not to have an educated mind ()

Tish : Would a Bodhisattva have knowledge of previous lives?

S : Well, it would depend upon the level that he had attained, but certainly, yes, the Mahayana teaching is that~&r is part of the equipment, so to speak, with which a Bodhisattva is equipped. That knowledge is not necessary for Enlightenment. I mean, an Arahant may not have that knowledge, but it is useful for someone like a Bodhisattva who wants to help all possible beings in all possible lives.

Ann : How does it actually help you?

S : Well, you might be able to illustrate the workings of karma. You
might be able to see the previous existences of the person who has come to
you, se~ t"~~r p~t A~stor~ ~o ~o

Marlene : Ah, so it's not just his own life?

S : No, it's even the capacity to see the previous lives of others too.

Punyavati : As the Buddha did.

S : As the Buddha did.

Stephanie : But also if you're trying to help somebody else it's useful. If you've had a similar experience you can be far more use. So a Bodhisattva would want to have as much past experience as possible.

S : Well, not so much have so much past experience but recollect
whatever past experience he has had so that he would know from within
what it was like, what it felt like, to be in~~rt~~ situation'. I mean, if
you take it to extremes, a Bodhisattva would be able to remember previous
existences as a poor man, a rich man, a man, a woman, a child, every
conceivable situation.

Trish : Perhaps that gave him the ability to choose his words.

S : At least a few guidelines. Alright, let's go on to fifteen.

Els . "A Sramana asked the Buddha: "What is goodness and what is
greatness?" The Buddha replied: "To follow the Way and hold
to what is true is good. When the will is in conformity with the
Way, that is greatness."

S : So what is the basis of this distinction between goodness and

greatness?
Indian
Maybe
What's the

It doesn't seem really a question that makes sense in any of the languages. It doesn't correspond to any technical distinction. It's more a Chinese-type question. Goodness and greatness. distinction between them?

Liz : Goodness is where you are actually making an effort following some path, whereas greatness you're following the Way.

following the Way.

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S Right. That seems to be the point of the distinction, even though why one is called goodness and one greatness is not so clear. Because the Buddha says: "To follow the Way and hold to what is true is good. When the will is in conformity with the Way, that is greatness," that is to say, naturally in conformity, spontaneously in conformity because you've become one with the Way, that is greatness. So it seems also to be 'il' and 'samadhi' on the one hand, a sort of distinction between the two. Wisdom on the other representing goodness, and concentration representing greatness. Or what I've called in other terminology reversible creativity and irreversible creativity. Goodness is reversible creativity, you can fall away from it. Greatness is irreversible creativity, you can't fall away from it. It just continues, it goes on and on, becoming greater and greater, better and better, more and more intense, more and more creative. The one carries you to the point of no return, the other carries on past the point of no return.

(end of tape)

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Elsie : () shows that it's not enough to be good.

S : Yes. It's not enough to be good, you have to be great as well.

Carla : Reminds me of your 'Aspects of Buddhist Morality' which really goes into it very deeply, very good.

S : One might also say that the distinction between goodness and greatness or between, using other terminology, being good and being wise, truly wise, is illustrated by a little saying I sometimes quote. It's a sort of traditional saying: "It takes all the wisdom of the wise to undo the harm done by the merely good." Or to take a current example, you might say, for instance, that Mrs. Mary Whitehouse is a good

woman, but she seems to be doing quite a lot of harm in some ways.
One could take that view. Some people doubt whether she's even doing any good.

: Does that mean, if it's saying: "When the will is in conformity with the Way, that is greatness," but the will, that's implying some insight then, because if you were just good

S : Oh, yes. I don't think the expression, "in conformity with" should be taken too literally. It really means that when the will, when you have become one with the Path itself. You are not trying to follow anything. You are that thing now. Your goodness is spontaneous. So spontaneous goodness is greatness.

Marlene : That links up with what you were saying about () precepts and how eventually you just do it because it's the natural thing to do.

S : Yes. Though I think the present context goes a bit beyond that.

Teresa : Does that also tie up yesterday about intuition and inspiration?
Because I think I'm still not quite clear about intuition.

S : Well, intuition, even inspiration, can be still mundane, but Insight, in the full technical sense in which the term is used in Buddhism, is transcendental. Insight with a capital 'I', so to speak.

Carla : The path of mundane morality and transcendental morality.

S : Yes. Anyway, have a creative cup of tea! _____ . I think someone asked me a question. It was the sort of thing, well, _____ it wasn't a serious question, it was something quite factual, it was _____ about themselves and I replied without thinking. Actually, the reply _____ was exactly correct, so, I don't know, I'm just trying to think what _____ the details were. I suppose that could count as an example of intuition. _____ csme and asked me: "What do you think I'm _____ going to do?" I forget what, but it was something quite unexpected, _____ out of the way~)~'d not heard anything about it. I said straightaway, _____ without thinking: "You're ~ng, ~ so-a And he was really surprised. He said: "Well, yes! It wasn't a question of thought- _____ reading because I hadn't even had time to think. I just replied instantly. I don't know quite why I did but the words came out of my mouth without my thinking of~it at all. () So it was a quite out of the way, complex sort of thing. It was exactly that.

: Has it anything to do with synchronicity?

S : Could be, but synchronicity represents a sort of philosophical explanation for (). One could explain that sort of thing in terms of synchronicity. Yes, I remember this person came up to me and he said: "I bet ~ don't know what I'm going to do." () immediately!

Iq~

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S(ctd) : I wish I could remember exactly what it was. It was about a year ago. It was a very out of the way sort of thing that he was going to do.

: Quite a shock. S : He hadn't told anybody about it ()

Teresa Actually, I realised that one of the 'miccha~--ditthis' that I used to have was that a spiritual teacher would be able to read your mind.

S : Well, what makes you th~nk that it's a 'miccha~ditthi'?

Teresa : Alright then, I won't say another word! You won't need to.'

Teresa : Was I right, then?

S : Well, put it this way, thought-reading or telepathy is not nearly so uncommon as we think. If there is a degree of sensitivity between people, well, there is something, something goes on which is at least akin to telepathy. Vt's not that someone is actually reading your thoughts but they're sensitive to, let's say, your feelings and your attitude. That is as good as reading your thoughts, if not better than.

Punyavati : In talking more like sort of greater depth of awareness, people can pick up thoughts or know what's going on with someone else. I

S : Awareness is nothin~~(). I'd rather say sensitivity.

Carla : Some time ago, doing quite a bit of meditation and I ended up doing some of the things at the same time as other people. We'd both stand up at exactly the same time or we'd both sit, it looked like a 'Tom and Jerry' cartoon or something sometimes. It gets really ludicrous and you feel awkward and you don't know who's had the thought or if yo~?ve both had the thought and you start to get really confused, maybe that's what, when you can~ t tell who~ 5 you and w~o~5 them.

:()

Carla : Yes. It is confusing, isn't it?

Stephanie : I've definitely found, when I've done a lot of meditation, I've had many more neo-telepathic experiences. I suppose because my mind's clearer.

S : And also perhaps you are more conscious of, more aware of, the messages, so to speak, which are coming to you.

Carla : Also it seems to me like certain places are more conducive to that than others. Places that are very isolated and places that are, certain places are much more conducive to that sort of experience than others. Place is a big factor in that.

S : We mentioned the other day, I'm not sure whether it was in this group or the other, about having the same dreams as other people.

Teresa : That's what I've always thought of as intuition actually. That sort of... Is that how we were saying it was yesterday?

S : I wouldn't call it necessarily intuition because intuition can operate with regard to, as it were, abstract matters which aren't the subject

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S(ctd) : matter of communication between people. You have an intuitive understanding of something. I mean, for instance, you could have, let's say, an intuitive, or I suppose one could use the word in this way, an intuitive understanding of art without having actually studied anything about art. For instance, if you're, so to speak, an expert, you can be shown a painting attributed to Botticelli and you say: "It's not Botticelli." You just know it and maybe subsequently that is confirmed scientifically but you can't explain. You can't say, for this and that reason it's not ~~~ Botticelli,~~~you just know intuitively that's not by Bott~celli.

Marlene : Is intuition like, presumably it is like using symbols.

S : I think not necessarily. I think it can operate via symbols, but not necessarily. I think it can operate via concepts too. There's mathematical intuition. The characteristic of intuition seems to be, as we said the other day, that it's direct and immediate and it doesn't go through any ~cess. Pseudo-intuition goes through the process, the relevant process~~very quickly, so quickly that you can't even follow it yourself sometimes, certainly other people can't.~~ think genuine intuition just sort of jumps straight from A to B. Or is at B immediately after thinking of A. That probably expresses it better. It doesn't even go from A to B, it's there, at B, in some mysterious manner, without actually going through any process. Just right there. That's intuition.

Christin~ : I think it's something to do with a very high level of receptivity either to the object or to yourself, so that there is an integration...

S : To give a sort of example of another kind, or at least from another level, it's said that Mozart did say that before composing his symphonies, which clearly occupied time-that is to say, the symphony itself occupied time, being mus~c-saw the whole symphony just in an instant. One could call that a sort of intuitive experience of this kind which he then just proceeded to unroll in~i~e~~tit initially he just saw the whole symphony in a flash, it was all there.

Stephanie : He must have had incredibly good concentration in order to hold it in his mind to produce those sheets and sheets of music.

S : Yes. Well, I think it was Mozart, I think it was when he was a youngster taken to the Sistine Chapel to hear the Pope's choir sing a special piece of music, quite a lengthy piece of music that the Pope never allowed anybody to write down because he wanted to reserve the

privilege of singing it to his choir in 1781. So, Mozart was taken there and he heard it once and he came out and wrote it all down from memory. And there's the similar example of Dr. Johnson who said that he could remember a passage of poetry after hearing it only once and prose after hearing it only twice. He retained it. MacThulley had a similar memory. They all had great powers of concentration. Perhaps that is an aspect of intuition.

Trish : I think I agree with Teresa that sometimes what I think is intuition is actually just a heightened awareness, a sensitivity to....

S : Yes. There's nothing sort of magical or miraculous about it, whereas in the case of genuine intuition there is almost.

Trish : Yes. It can be a (subtle?) operating, working ()

S : When that instance occurred that I mentioned in my own experience with

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S(ctd) : that person, I was quite taken aback myself, because I didn't think. My mouth opened and the words came out: () I did also have the experience in India some years ago of giving a number of lectures and I was aware of the words coming out of my mouth but there was no corresponding mental process. That was quite odd. You might say, perhaps, it was an £~q~o~ intuition, I don't know. That might be stretching the t~rwi too much. But I did have that experience. It happened for quite a long time. I gave a number of lectures like that.

Stephanie : Did you feel as though you were hearing your own words?

S : Oh, yes.

Stephanie : I mean, as though someone else was saying them.

S : No, it wasn't as though someone else was saying it. It was i~inttI~ ~ v'Ao was saying it, but there were no corresponding thought processes.

Stephanie : So it was very one-pointed, like a point of light ?

S : Yes. I always do feel one-pointed when giving a lecture. Well, it varies a bit according to circumstances~ and the subject matter also, but normally I am quite one-pointed when I speak.

Vajragita : Is it like being spontaneous?

S : In a way. Though spontaneity is a bit different. For instance, we had a study group at the LBC upstairs in the community and afterwards people were saying we had a really good study group and somebody said it was a pity about all the noise from the traffic and somebody else said: "Yes, you couldn't even hear what we were saying at one point." So I said: "What noise? I didn't hear a thing." I really didn't, not a thing. So I was quite surprised again and I

assume it was because I was very very concentrated. I do get very concentrated when I'm speaking either giving a lecture or thinking about the Dharma - What, Oh - "don't know" Trish
: Missing the bells in meditation!

S : Were these ladies difficult to get up this morning? There seemed to be so many bells. They must have been very concentrated!

Trish : Bhante, if you're operating on that sort of level the rational mind almost gets called in only when needed

S : Only when needed, yes. It's not allowed to go on thinking when it isn't really needed.

Carla If you find yourself in a life and death situation, very often....

S : Right yes, indeed.

Carla that is the part of you that comes. You don't know. Your head knows nothing. You just do.

S : Well, it's that part of you, so to speak, which the Zen training and Zen discipline aims at bringing out, even in the so-called Ways, the Dos, ken-do, ju-do and so on. The aim, so far as I've understood it, is to get you to act from that non-conceptual, almost existential level, so that you react, you respond, without thinking and in that way you do the right thing. In other words, it's teaching you, and training you, to use your intuition.

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Sulocana : When you're reading a book in perhaps a very crowded room with lots of people talking and sometimes all the noise can disappear. Can this be a similar sort of thing?

S : Well, it's certainly concentration, certainly power of concentration. Some people - do have it. Indians seem to have it. They can meditate in a crowded room, lots of other people, in the kitchen, which is also bedroom. There are Friends who are doing this. There's the children doing their homework - Le cooking.

Jan : Padmasuri sent a tape letter and I commented to her on the noise on it and she hadn't noticed it. She hadn't been there very long but she had already got adjusted to it. I really picked up on it.

: Do Zen people then assume that any actions that are based on intuition will automatically take you in the right direction?

S : They seem to. Certainly within the context of these Dos, these Ways, yes. They as it were - trust the Suzuki calls it the irrational () that is a bit misleading. The trans-conceptual, let us say, they trust that more than we usually do in the West. In karate and judo and so on, as far as I've understood, they teach you, they train you, to fall back on that, not to rely so much on your thinking processes. They aim at giving you no time to think.

You have to respond instantly or you're hit or knocked over. So you just learn to respond without thinking. I thThk~a~~I~ve understood, that this is the point, at least from one point of view, of the whole exercise.

Punyavati : Is it the same thing as putting~in Buddhism, putting oneself in the crucial situation, like the cremation ground?

S : Yes, right, in a way. It's like when the Zen master calls for the answer to a koan. He doesn't want you to think it up. You have to reply instantly, have to be right there with the answer, without any hesitation. Bang! Right from your solar plexus. So clearly it's not just a question of purveying or relaying information. It's got to come from somewhere else in you.

Do you think meditation can develop that to a degree?

S : I won't say, perhaps it wouldn't be quite correct to say, that meditation develops that, but meditation helps clear away all the conditionings that get in the way of that.

Carla : Friends of mine, quite a number, have done different martial arts. Almost all martial arts teachers suggest that if their studen~are at all interested they take up meditation. Most of them do suggest that.

S : Good. I think that's almost a new development, at least in the West, isn't it? Would that apply to karate?

Carla : Yes.

S : Because we used to have karate classes at the Archway Centre and let it be known that these classes were run by a karate teacher who was a Friend of ours and the people came along to ~earn karate and he suggested - to some people that they might like to take up meditation, but hardly anybody responded. I think they had a different sort of image of karate. This was about nearly ten years ago. I think they had a sort of kung fu image of karate.

Trish : Bruce Lee.

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Bruce Lee came later perhaps.

Elsie : 7Shao Lin Temple. They used to have all these martial arts, they trained the monks in all these martial arts. It was called the Shao Lin Temple.

S I thought you said Shirley Temple!

Teresa : What would the irrational be then? If that...

S : The distorted emotional which had been repressed, not admitted into consciousness. One of the things that I have noticed J5 that very rational people are very irrational.

Teresa : Yes. They're irrational about being rational!

S : No, not just that, but if you're very rational, you insist on being very rational in a rigid sort of way. It means you're sort of, you're suppressing or even repressing the emotional element in you, the emotional side of yourself. But though it is suppressed or even repressed, it doesn't take that lying down. It affects you in all sorts of queer, indirect sort of ways.

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S : Yes. So very often you find that it's the very rational person who can, on occasion, behave very irrationally. Whereas the person who recognises and admits his emotions and, in a way, allows them to influence him, or at least takes them into consideration, is likely to be more rational, more reasonable. So sometimes with some people, and I think it's more common with men than with women, you get this very odd combination of extreme, hard rationality and really weird irrationality. They can switch from one to another very quickly. In a way, being very rational but almost immediately afterwards behaving very irrationally.

Teresa : It feels really odd to be with someone who's like that.

Trish : Traditional image of the very proper professional.

S : Yes.

Teresa : I sometimes see A that on the Tube. If you're travelling when it's rush-hour and people obviously have city jobs, suits, but they really do things to get in or out which - they're just not aware of what they're doing. And it's also a way that they wouldn't behave when they're at home or at work.

S : I'm thinking of rather more bizarre things than that; I can't quite think of an example at the moment. It's more in their reactions. I mean, they may speak very, very logically, very rationally, insist on doing everything in a rational way for definite reasons, but from time to time they'll just be completely irrational in their behaviour or their approach or their attitude, in quite a bizarre sort of way, so it's a bit of a mix. Anyway, you get the general picture, as it were.

Teresa : What would you actually say, what would you do to help someone like that if we're not to do that?

S : Clearly they need to get more in touch with their feelings and to appreciate their feelings more, recognise the whole emotional side of them, integrate themselves more, integrate the rational and the irrational more than they do. Alright, let's go on to sixteen.

Elsie : "A Sramana asked the Buddha: "What is great power and what is the acme of brilliance?" The Buddha answered: "To be able to hear insult (without retort) implies great power. He that does not cherish cause for resentment, but remains calm and firm equally (under all circumstances), and who bears all things without indulging in abuse will certainly be honoured by men. The acme of brilliance is reached when the mind is utterly purged of impurities and nothing false or foul remains (to besmirch) its purity. When there is nothing, from before the formation of heaven and earth until now or in any of the ten quarters of the universe which you have not seen, heard and understood; when you have attained to a knowledge of everything, that may be called brilliance."

: ~Great power. The Buddha says: "To be able to bear insult (without retort) implies great power": In what sort of sense do you think ~power? is being used here?

: Patience.

S : More than that. Of course patience is involved.

Carla : Power over your instinctual nature, your emotions.

S : I'd say just strength, great inner resource:, great inner reserves of energy. To be able to bear insult without retort implies great strength really. So it's the strong person who doesn't react.

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S : Yes. The strong person can forbear. "He that does not cherish cause for resentment, but remains calm and firm equally (under all circumstances), and who bears all things without indulging in abuse will certainly be honoured by men." So, "cherish cause for resentment," this is something which it is very easy to do, isn't it? There's a verse in the 1 Dhammapada' quite early on where the Buddha says, I think it goes something like: "He abused me, he beat me. One who cherishes such thoughts will not be free from hate." Resentment is quite a terrible thing. "The acme of brilliance is reached when the mind is utterly purged of impurities and nothing false or foul remains (to besmirch) its purity." ~n here ~t~ ~e~ti ~5n0~n~g,C~rhCLom£kL~f~e~~~j~~e forination of heaven and earth until now or in any of the ten quarters of the universe which you have seen, heard and understood; when you have attained to a knowledge of everything, that may be called brilliance." The note says: "It is of great interest to note that a mind purged of impurities is rated higher than the most complete and universal knowledge." I don't think it's complete and universal knowledge that is meant, in the ordinary sense of extensive scientific knowledge, for instance; I think it's knowledge of the transcendental. But purity, nonetheless, is rated even higher. Transcendental purity. It is a little difficult to understand the real basis of the distinction. Maybe it's obscured by the language of the translation. It doesn't seem to correspond to anything in the way of technical

terms in Pali or Sanskrit. But certainly, capacity to bear insult is important. Purity is important. Knowledge, even, is important.

Noel : Doesn't it also carry a measure of compassion?

S : If it's real knowledge. Knowledge in the sense of Wisdom, yes, compassion must be there.

Noel : And not to cherish resentment.

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S : Yes, that too, yes, certainly. Not simply that you don't cherish cause for resentment. You've got actually more metta, karun~, for people, so there's no question of retaliation, no question of cherishing resentment. Or even 4t a lower level than that, your emotional positivity is such that you are just not able to react in that sort of way.

Stephanie : If you have great power and you have to use it to, in a sense, control your own reactions, then that power is wasted in one way, isn't it?

S : In one way it is.

Stephanie : Because you're in conflict with yourself.

S : Yes.

Stephanie : That's why purity is obviously more splendid.

S : Right, yes. That's right. It is sometimes a strain to be in a situation where you~re having to bear a lot continually because so much of your energy is just going into preventing other people, preventing circumstances, from affecting you in a particular way. You've no free energy left over perhaps with which to get on with something more spont~ous and creative. It's only when you get away from that sort of person or that sort of situation you realise sometimes what a great strain you have been under, how much of your energy was tied up just keeping things at bay.

Eve What do you do in a situation which demands you to be giving out a lot, when you realise you're not getting the space you need and yet a~ the same it feels likJ7~emandSand it's the best thing in that situation? ~?)

S : Well, this is not exactly the situation that I'm talking about. This is a situation in which your energy,%~a lot of your energy, the greater

part of your energy, even perhaps most of your energy, is expended in counteracting the negative influence of the people with whom you are in contact or the surroundings in which you live, and clearly you can't go on like that indefinitely. The less time you spend in that sort of situation the better. If there's just something here and there that you have to put up with, well, fair enough. But if the whole situation is so negative that so much of your energy has to go into just preventing it from having a bad effect on you, the sooner you get out of that situation the better. It may be difficult because it may even be your home situation. But nonetheless, your question, as a separate question, remains, doesn't it? Well, very often one just has to weigh one factor against another. You're the only one, or the only person actually in the situation, the only one who can decide. If you've had enough, you've had enough. If you can't carry on, you can't carry on. If you can, alright, decide for yourself whether you will. Why not? After weighing all the different factors involved, consulting your spiritual friends.

C~rtsVt'Vle : Weighing the different factors (c~~) complicate (~ii~ s;t~at;o~)

S : Yes. Because it's a question of how much value, this is what one means in a way, how much value Ov\~ ~~ give to all those different factors? Sometimes people can be very torn.

Christine () what each situation can gain for you or someone else.

S : Yes, right.

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Punyavati : I wanted to ask you about insult, bearing insult. There is a story about the Buddha, I can't remember much about it, b~~e encouraged his monks not to react and retaliate if they are abused. Do you know the story?

S : Well, there was a story earlier on in this work itself, wasn't there? Is that the one that you are talking about or is there another one?

Punyavati : No, there is another one.

S : Well, the Buddha certainly did encourage the monks not to retaliate.

Punyavati : I've often been questioned about this (), why Buddhists are passive, why they won't actually stand up for themselves, if they are actually encouraged not to retaliate?

S : Well, what does one mean by retaliation? Perhaps it's a

Punyavati Speak up or defend oneself. They often think Buddhists are quite passive, they have to just ta~C it. I've not been very clear about it myself.

S : What sort of insult is one thinking of? What sort of situation is one thinking of? For instance, in the case of the monks, or sometimes in the Buddha's day, people used to insult the monks by calling them: "Hey, mund*"" 'Munds1(1is usually translated as 1bald-pate'. So sometimes small boys might call after the monk: "Hey, mund*t Hey, bald-pate! Baldy!" Well, what is the purpose of retaliation? Do you see what I mean? Sometimes Brahmins used to call after the Buddhist Bikkhus 'mundal(~ a common term of abuse. Brahmins used to do this.

Carla : I wanted to ask about a situation earlier, when we were discussing the situations and how not to intervene. I was in a queue and one woman was attacking another verbally in a very vicious fashion and the bass of the attack was, in fact, racist, the other woman being fro~ A~r?~a. And I did feel fury anil I was trying to pluck up my courage to say something in front of the other, because the woman who was being attacked was quite speechless and looking quite upset, distressed. I just didn't know what to do and I felt really inadequate because I went numb. What do you do in a situation like that?

S : Well, you can speak up. You can say: "well, look"...

Carla : That's a good time to intervene, isn't it?

S : .. because, well, perhaps it is. The woman might turn on you and hit you with her umbrella, depending on what sort of woman she is. You will have to take that into consideration, but ~t would,I think, on the whole, be better to speak up and say: "Well, look, that's not the right way to speak. Do you really believe what you are saying? Don't you realise you are abusing another human being? What difference does it make if one person is of one colour and another is of another c~~~ur~ Does it really matter? Don't you feel that you are all human beings?" You can make that point quite strongly, but you have to be prepared for trouble. Possibly she may turn on you. On the other hand she may collapse completely, be quite ashamed of herself. This is also possible.

Carla : T think I was paralysed by my own anger. If I had said anything, I'd have shrieked at her.

S : Right, yes. You have to be firm, but not ~ust to make the situation worse. But sometimes if someone does speak up in that sort of way, the person concerned will think twice next time, so to sr~~k.

Carla : I did that when I saw one child attacking another; again it was a racist attack. I said something very firmly to the child who was doing it. But I always find it easier to tell children than to tell adults because they can't beat you up.

S : Can't they? Sometimes they can.

Carla : He was littler than me!

(end of side one)

S : What can one say in Just like when the Brahmin calls the monk a bald-pate, well, what can he say?

Carla : I'm not bald!

S : He can't say he's not a bald-pate. It's a question of the other person's whole attitude and that's not going to be corrected just in a few well-chosen words. If you try maybe you get worse.

: Sometimes though, I think people can be quite impressed by a demonstration of your kind of genuine feeling and reaction to something like that. If you're really angry about something, and you actually show that anger just as it is, you really impress them and get through a lot more than you imagine.

S : I think you ought not to tolerate misunderstanding or misrepresentation. If, for instance, someone says to you: "You're a Buddhist and I know what Buddhists are like, you people are always torturing yourselves." If they say something like that, well, then you can say: "No, that's not the case." You can be quite firm about it. I think personal abuse is rather a different thing from misrepresentation.

Stephanie : Some insults are abuse that is simply a device to attract attention and if you do retaliate you're playing into their hands.

S : Yes. Like, for instance, if a woman attracts undesirable attention in the form of wolf whistles or comments from men that she happens to pass, well, what can you say? The best thing, presumably, is to ignore, unless you want to turn and hit them with your umbrella!

: Sometimes I turn and ask them if they've lost their dog!

S : But then you might meet someone who is even more witty than you are!
Anyway I think you have to be a bit careful there.

Punyavati : Among the Indians it works by saying: "How would you feel if it was your sister or mother?"

S : Yes.

Trish : Sometimes, actually, you can play into it and a genuine smile works because they, it's made a joke of it.

S : I think Dhammadinna told, or wrote to, somebody that when she was going to, I think it was to New Zealand, I think she got the plane from, was it Holland or somewhere? But anyway, there were a lot of young Indians, a lot of young teenage Sikhs, on the plane. So when they saw her, a woman, they were making all sorts of remarks, a few wolf-whistles, all that sort of thing, but when she told them her age, their attitude

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S(ctd) : completely changed. "Oh, excuse us. She 'i"v~k£< t~c;r ;~~~;ti~~ ~ ~ ~.~~ \$t~° You are just like our mother.'~' She said, or wrote, that their attitude changed completely. They were only sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, that sort of age. On hearing she was, well, whatever it is, their reaction changed completely. They saw her in a completely different way. It was impossible for them to behave in that way any more. I certainly don't think that Buddhists shouldn't stand up for them- selves or stand up for Buddhism. I don't think they should be pusillanimous or allow themselves to be misrepresented. I think we should take a much more vigorous approach than perhaps we have done. I spoke about this some days ago. I Ag~~A~?d not allow non-Buddhists to tell us what we believe as Buddhists. In India you get a lot of this. You get a certain amount of it even in this country. People will tell you what you believe. If you disagree, they're so convinced that their interpretation of Buddhism is right that they think you can't be a real Buddhist. You're some sort of heretical Buddhist. They're not prepared to correct their own ideas. You must have got it wrong. Alright, let's go on to seventeen.

Noel : "Men who cherish longings and desires are those who have not perceived the Way. Just as, if clear water be stirred up with the hand, none of those looking into it will perceive their reflections, so men in whose minds filth has been stirred up by longings and desires will not perceive the Way. You Sramanas must abandon longings and desires. When the filth of longings and desires has been entirely cleared away, then only will you be able to perceive the Way."

S : Well, this~rjfl&ri~ applies Oh all levels. One might express it by saying that subjective emotions distort reality, or distort your perception of reality. Do you see what I mean? If your mind is disturbed by all sorts of emotional factors, you just won't see things as

they are. You won't see straight, you won't see clearly.

Sulocana : This is often an attribute which is considered womanly, that men think women have. That their desires distort their views and that it is natural for women to behave like that.

S : It seems to be natural for everybody. To the extent that you're unenlightened this is what happens with everybody. C

Sulo~ana : It seems that it S particularly attributed to women.

fi6tEi~~~a: It ~A0~~~~ //s'. W~U) S : Maybe.~:t
shouldn't be especially or specifically attributed to anybody because it is a
characteristic of the unenlightened mind itself. That your subjective
emotionality distorts your perception of things as they really are. Well,
we see that especially in human relationships. If you like someone you're
not even p~~~a~ed to recognise sometimes that their unskilful behaviour
is unskilfu~an~4ice versa, if you dislike someone, if you've really got it in
for them, you can't even recognise or acknowledge their good points. In
this way, your subjective emotional state distorts your picture of
reality. So this applies at all levels. Not only on the comparatively
advanced level that the Buddha is referring to, but even on the
or~inary human level. Your thinking is influenced by your wishes,
you wishful thinking. Often you see things as you'd like to see
them, the way you want to see them.

Ann : We were talking about this in a study group a while ago and the fact that scientists now recognise nowadays that they have to allow for their influence o~~~~periments.

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S Yes. This is not just emotional though. This is the influence ~n the object of the subject as such. The perceiving subject actually influences by the fact of its perception the object which it perceives. In other words, the perception is part of the object to some extent, so cannot be left out of the picture. So scientific objectivity is a pseudo- objectivity. But here one is concerned with a specifically emotional fact. So you can't really see anything without, well, seeing it as it isn't. You can't see it as it is apart from your perception of it, because when you look at it, you affect it. So you can~ t see it as it is apart from anybody's perception of it. You can't ever see it as it is in itself. Quite a thought, isn't it? You can only see it as it is in itself by not seeing it at al%which is what the perfection of Wisdom is! ~, it's not quite like that. It simply means that the perceiving subject has to be taken into acco~. You can't have an objectivity entirely divorced from all subjectivity, nor can you have a subjectivity entirely divorced from all objectivity.

Christine : It's good to have~positive bas~s ~or your subjectivity.

S : Yes. If your subjectivity is positive and healthy it will not distort your perception of reality. I think this is what the Buddha is getting at. If, for instance, your emotional attitude

is one of metta, far from distorting reality, you'll see reality all the more clearly because impartially, without prejudice. I think it's the distorted emotionality which distorts your perception of things as they are, not emotionality as such.

Eve : So you couldn't perceive something without emotionality.

S : No, you couldn't. For instance, hatred, an unskilful mental state, is a negative emotion. If you perceive something with hatred you won't perceive it as it is. If you see another person with hatred you won't see them as they really are. If you perceive them with a~infatuated love you won't see them as they really are, you inevitably distort. If you see them with metta you will see them as they are, well, to some extent~ot fully, perhaps, because metta, in the ordinary sense, is not equivalent to Insight. But to the extent that you see them with real metta, to that extent you will see them as they really are. But if you see them with hatred, if you see them with craving, if you see them with jealousy, if you see them with fear, you won't see them as they really are. Negative emotion distorts perception of the object. So, put it this way, to the extent that we are influenced by negative emotions, we cannot but misunderstand other people. So if our mental state, if our emotional state, is predominantly negative, predominantly unskilful, we cannot but see things askew, especially people, askew and distorted all the time. That's quite a thought, isn't it? Even your so-called near and dear. To the extent that your emotions are unskilful you see them in a distorted way. You see yourself in a distorted way by looking into a distorting mirror. If you don't have love for yourself, metta for yourself, you must see yourself in a distorted way. If you hate yourself, so to speak, you must see yourself in a distorted way. Again, that's quite a thought. If you don't have metta towards yourself you can't see yourself as you really are.

Trish : We did a game~where we got people to draw themselves as they were when they were thirteen and people (~t'tk all sorts of interesting things. Like some people left off faces and some people made themselves very small or...

S : Why thirteen?

Trish : It was to a group of teenagers

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Christine : Interesting you saying that metta approaches Insight. Yes S :
&Because of its approach to equanimity. You could say that love is blind but metta isn't blind. Or a certain kind of love is blind, isn't it, everybody knows? : So is this why Wisdom and Compassion always go together?

S : Yes. On a very high level, yes, indeed. You can't really have someone with a sort of cold, clear intellect really seeing things as they are if his or her emotions are negative. Very often we think in that sort of way: Oh that person's emotions may be quite negative, quite unskilful, but they do see things clearly. No, they don't actually. It's a pseudo-clarity. A pseudo-rational clarity sometimes. Do you see what I mean?

Carla : I think you said somewhere that if you actually do the metta-bhavana properly, then we don't... then there's really very little need to do the mindfulness at all.

S : Yes. Because if you really do the metta-bhavana properly, well, there is an element of awareness fully integrated into that. You can't really direct metta towards even your best friend without being aware of them. All the more aware of them because of the metta.

Eve : In regard to what you were saying before, why is it then that you have three basic people, being split up into three basic types, greed type, hate etc?

S : Well, that's what Buddhaghosa says anyway, one thousand years after the Buddha. Anyway, carry on.

Eve : Why is the hate type put in correlation with Wisdom?

S : Ah, that's a good question there. I'd say it should be the anger type rather than the hate type. There is a reason given for that given by Buddhaghosa. He says, just as (it's an analogy rather than a simile), he says, Buddhaghosa says, just as hatred seeks out the faults in the hated object, because when you hate someone you just want to find fault with them, so Wisdom finds out the faults of conditioned existence. So it is an analogy without there being an actual similarity or resemblance.

Stephanie : I've heard something similar to that. I don't know whether it comes from the same thing. That if you have a tendency to hate, you can use it constructively because if you really look at what you're hating you'll find you are actually hating faults, you're hating unskilful actions or negative states.

S : It's just you should dissociate those from people, dissociate your hatred from people.

Stephanie : And in the same way, if you get too attached to people you can dissociate their virtues and just see them as virtues.

S : Yes. Well, Shantideva says: "Hate hatred." If you want to indulge in hate, alright, well, hate the hatred itself. Don't hate living beings. But I think it's very important to understand that the intellect, so to speak, is, can't really be a dissociated function, seeing things clearly, in the absence of any positive emotion. I don't think that sort of alienated intellectual clarity is a real intellectual clarity at all. Do you see what I'm getting at?

Trish : We seem to have put such value on the intellect.

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S : But it's as though, one could put it this way, the intellect without emotion, or intellect without positive emotion is not even really adequate intellect. Blake is, in effect, saying this same sort of thing. Reason without emotion is not reason, really. It's a ghost of itself. That is what Blake calls the spectre in man.

Carla : I'm not sure I understand that.

S : I have a Blake dictionary if anyone would like to... It is rather complex, but Blake

does use the expression 'spectre' for the alienated reason. Spectre with a capital 'S'. I think he represents the Spectre sometimes a sort of fleshless skeleton. And that is what the intellect ~reason is like, without emotion. It's not a real body, so to speak. So scholars, for instance, who give you a purely intellectual account of Buddhism, of giving you an account of Buddhism, do it entirely, so to speak, from the intellect, can't possibly give you an adequate account of it. You can even see their irrational feelings coming into the picture~~~distorting their so-called intellectual presentation of Buddhism, but it's all unacknowledged. They think they're being perfectly rational and logical and giving an objective account of Buddhism. They are doing no such thing. In the first place, a purely objective account of Buddhism, in this sense an account divorced from any kind of emotional attitude, is impossible. But there is an unacknowledged, therefore irrational, therefore negative emotional element in their pseudo-intellectual presentation. What a horrible sort of way of dealing with Buddhism!

Punyavati : I've noticed sometimes people like that become quite cynical and bitter if that negative emotion is not expressed...

S : Cynicism is a really horrible thing. I had, not so long ago, I think it was last year or the year before, I don't know if you heard about it, a regular campaign against cynicism because I found a lot of it in communities - I'm afraid more in men's communities than in women's~and I really started jumping on it. Such a dreadful thing, cynicism, and its cynical pseudo-humour, all that kind of thing, it's really dreadful, quite, as I said, quite incompatible with any spiritual life.

Trish : What sort of thing was it directed at in those days?

S : Everything. Anything. It becomes almost an habitual attitude. I think I scotched it. It's difficult to see how it arises. It's a bit smart, a bit clever, a bit pseudo-sophisticated.

Punyavati : It's sometimes witty.

S : Sometimes it's a bit witty, sometimes cutting.

Christine : I think it arises very much in academic circles.

S : Not necessarily, though they do go in for it in a big way, but you also find it in~":academic circles.

Eve : It's like an undermining.

S : It's very undermining. It's a constant undermining. It's an undermining of emotional positivity. It's undermining of anything spiritual really.

Noel : What's saying you don't have any faith in what you're doing.

S : Yes. It's making light of things.

Noel : It makes people wonder why you're doing it.

S : Yes, right.

Trish : Perhaps we're so taught to value the rational. It's one of the ways that the irrational....

S : It's a debunking attitude.

Stephanie : Perhaps it comes out of fear of failure. If you tend to undermine your own values it's because you're not sure you'll live up to them.

S : Yes. Also, maybe just a simple fear of positive emotion which some people seem to have, or people almost not knowing how to handle positive emotion. Cyni~ism is really one of the seven deadly sins.

Carla : I'm really glad you said that because I found that quite difficult when I became involved with the Friends. I experienced that, I could hear people talking together, particular Order Members who were men actually, talking together at different points and I found it very alienating to listen to their conversations about other people.

S : Well, it's not only about other people, it's about other things, about ideals, everything, as I said it can touch everything. Whatever failings women may have, let's acknowledge they do have a few, this doesn't seem to be one of them.

: I think women also have the same thing.

S : Do you? Oh, dear! Another illusion gone. Maybe Sulocana disagrees.

Sulocana : I don't know really.

S : Well, certainly women don't go in for it in the big way that men very often do. I think I can say that.

Yan : Perhaps it's like women and competition. It's not as out front, it's much more underground in a way.

: They don't go in for cold intellectualism as much. Sulocana : It isn't especially an academic... : I think women become bitter rather than cynical.

S : Ah, yes. That's a different thing, bitter rather than cynical, yes, I

think that's true, bitter. Carla : I used to be awfully cynical.

S : Well, perhaps ~h~a~~'s why you are able to recognise it and why you didn't like it becaus ~yOur own past discarded self t\$L~ ~o~ cotsf~ ~e~.

Carla : I was still quite close to it because it was at the beginning of my involvement with the Friends.

S : Maybe you were wanting to get away from that sor~ of

Carla : Yes.

Sulocana : Perhaps women become emotionally unstable in another way. I mean, it tends to go o~o the emotions rather than the intellectual~ maybe.

S : Hysterical rather than cynical!

S of 42 S D5 T2 16 a : Cynicism is a distorted emotion, is it?

S : It's... there's a very extraordinary thing in cynicism, it's a distortion of the intellect and it's also a distortion of the emotions, distortion of the whole personality.

: They think they're being really clever.

S : Yes. Anyway, I don't mind admitting I didn't only scotch that, I stamped on it hard anytime I got the chance. I used to say things like, at breakfast I used to say: "Come on, no cynicism~please!" Whoever made these sort of remarks and I jumped on it whenever. I really didn't like it.

Eve : It's probably quite helpful having somebody around outside of that actually because I should imagine that once a few people got into it...

S : Oh, yes. It's a very groupy sort of thing. Oh, yes, it's dreadful in that sort of way.

: I~5 ~~~e the f2aI&a~ke.-

S : It's what Reich called an emotional (phase?). But 'bitterness', let's dwell a little on bitterness, whether or not it's more characteristic of women, but some people are bitter, aren't they?

: What do you mean by 'bitter'? S : Well, what do you mean by 'bitter'?

: Something akin to the feeling of sour grapes, really deeply ingrained and it involves a fatalistic attitude, passive attitude, that you don't want to actively take steps against whatever it is that's producing the bitterness.

S : I think it's even more than that. It's based on frustration and disappointment.

Sulocana : Hurts the person who has it badly. S : Oh, yes. Stephanie
 : Seems to go a bit with depression as well. S : Yes. ~ri'iti~~ :
 Yes. Particularly if it's blocked anger.

S : I have known bitter people. I'm afraid that as far as my memory goes
 they were mostly women, but they could be very, very bitter, very often
 in connection with other people and often in connection with other,
 younger women. Anyway, let's not dwell on it. But
 certainly all these sorts of emotions have to be swept aside, otherwise
 you just can't see things as they are. Fear too, fear really distorts, people
 become so fearful, so afraid, so anxious, that you just don't see the
 situation as it is. It's really distorted by your fear. You could say, at least
 one could make out a case for, fear distorting Reality almost more than
 anything else.

Stephanie : Could you give any ideas about how to get rid of fear? Because I've
 realised it's such a pervasive thing, from a very low-level anxiety to
 a full-blown phobia.

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S : Well, what is the opposite of fear? It's confidence. You have to
 build up your confidence and you have to build it up on a realistic
 base. If you're afraid of doing something, well, you just have to do
 that thing and do it until your fear of doing it has been eliminated.
 Whether it's plucking up courage to speak to a stranger or doing a parachute
 jump.

Trish : So often it can be the fear of something that really is worse than the
 actual thing, like with failure.

S : Yes, yes.

Trish : It's the fear of the failure rather than the thing itself.

S : Many ~ person has had the experience of being really afraid to go,
 say, to the dentist. But when you are actually there, in the dentist's
 chair, nothing at all. You wonder what all the fuss was about. The
 bogey has disappeared. SA~, Trish : One of the really bad
 things about~~drugs and taking pain killers is that you can't contact where the
 pain is. There's just this nebulous anxiety.

S : Yes. The comparison here is really very apt: "Just as, if clear water
 be stirred up with the hand, none of those looking into it will perceive
 their reflections, so men in whose minds filth has been stirred up by
 longings and desires will not perceive the Way."
 That's really very important. You can~t even perceive ordinary things
 straight, not to speak of the Way, not to speak of the Dharma. You

can't even see your friends and relations straight, not to speak of
 mitras and so on. Some people fall prey to such terrible
 misunderstandings, don't they? They misinterpret things you've said,
 misinterpret things you've done, all on account of their unskilful,
 negative emotional state. You can make the most innocent remark,
 very, very positive, but they misunderstand, they misinterpret, they
 start feeling very resentful and angry. Nothing you can do can shake
 their conviction that, yes, they've seen things the way they are, they've
 understood. You're just trying to fool them. aSometimes there's
 that ynu can say to convince them.

kalyana

or

their

be

nothing

Sulocana : They sometimes believe that one~ S pretending, I think, when one
 doesn't have the same kind of reaction.

S : Yes, that's true.

Sulocana : And they seem to think it's a lie.

S : They haven't enough imagination to enter into you, to appreciate that
 your reaction may be quite different. I remember I had an experience
 a bit like that several times with somebody. For instance, he would
 ask me, to give an example, "Would you like tea or coffee?" And I'd
 say: "I don't really mind." And this used to quite upset him. "You
 must mind. You must surely prefer one to the other." And I'd say:
 No, I really don't. If you're making coffee, that's fine. If you're
 making tea, that's fine. I really don't mind." No, he couldn't
 accept it. He insisted: "You must have a preference. You can't possibly
 have a preference." But I really didn't. But this is how it is
 isn't it? You say: "No, I don't mind a certain thing,"
 travelling and people say: "That seat must be very hard."
 that's alright, I don't mind." But they think that
 something ought to be done about it, bring a cushion
 a lot of trouble and you say: "Weall, I really adon't
 believe you. There are more complicated examples. Maybe you ca~ think
 of some.

not

sometimes,

maybe you're

And you say: "Oh,

you do mind, that

or something. It's

mind," but they can't

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S(ctd) : But it's the inability to enter into another person's response and that shows lack of
 imagination,~lack of clarity, emotional positivity.

Ann : Possibly ~ a like the passage about wanting affirmation or denial.

S : That's true, yes. A 'for' or ""~'against'. Sometimes it can happen, you genuinely
 don't have a preference one way or the other. Maybe ~t~s a question of going to see a film.
 Someone says: "Shall we go and see this, shall we go and see that?" You say: "I don't mind.
 You decide." And that sometimes makes them uneasy, that you don~t have a preference, ~you
 really don't mind.

Stephanie : Sometimes people don't want the responsibility, because if they decide and it's a bad film, then it's their fault.

S : Yes, that's true. Familiar situation, isn't it? But it does seem more and more that in the true individual, reason and emotion are thoroughly integrated. That you don't have an intellect apart from emotions or emotions apart from intellect. You see and understand and feel positively all at the same time. It's the same thing in a way. It's just you, perceiving, experiencing. It can't be categorised either as just intellectual or just emotion. At the highest possible level 'the oneness, so to speak, of Wisdom and Compassion in the Bodhi'attva and in the Buddha. The Wisdom is the Compassion and the Compassion is the Wisdom, so to speak. They're not really separated though you can distinguish them. a-a It's the same if you have a talk with someone. You ask, let's say, their advice. Maybe they give you some advice. But even if they're explaining something and clarifying, well, if they really are an individual, there's warmth~at the same time. It's not a cold, intellectual analysis of your situation. At the same time, they're not just giving sympathy in the ordinary sense, without any understanding. Both are there. They understand and they feel with and for you. There's sympathy too. There's some insight and there's also metta at the same time. Not two things together, but one thing, so to speak, a unified understanding and metta. If we use the word understanding in this sort of way it has emotional sort of undertones, doesn't it?

: - understand the person

S : Yes, yes. There's not simply the person who is capable of a sharp, intellectual analysis of your situation. It's also the person who empathises with you. Though some people think that you attain to a greater clarity of understanding by keeping the emotional element out. That is far from being the case. ~~~~~on't let your emotions get in the way," they say, "Just think clearly." Well, it's true, in a way. Don't let any skilful emotions get in the way, but positive emotions cannot get in the way. Positive emotions are entirely appropriate to any situation and will help you see more clearly. In fact, as I said before, the two will become one, there'll be a unified metta-cum- insight, as it were.

Teresa : Some people seem to think that metta is not as important.

S : Well, they think metta sort of silly and sloppy and sentimental, but that's not true.

: No, it's more important. S : It's more, it's more important.

Teresa : New people also usually find it more difficult. They can concentrate, do the mindfulness, but not connect up with metta.

S : A few people~I've found though, a very definite minority, take to the metta immediately and they are quite lut~~y6W~~ don't know if one is still finding this at the different centres.

: Occasionally.

S : You just get the occasional person to whom metta is a revelation and they take to it, as one of them said to me, 'just like ducks to water.' Anyway, that's a positive note on which to end, i5fl'~ i~?

(end of tape)

: ~£ "The Buddha said: "With those who have perceived the Way, it is thus. Just as, when one enters a dark house with a torch, the darkness is dissipated and only light remains, so: by studying the Way and perceiving the truth, ignorance is dissipated and insight remains for ever."

S : This is a comparison one finds quite often in the Pali scriptures. In fact there are four comparisons, four similes, which one usually finds together in this connection. There's th~~ simile of lighting a torch in the dark and dispelling the darkness; then there's one of setting upright something that had been knocked over; then the comparison of a man freed from debt~ and then there was another one. Anyone remember s[~~t tka~t i5?

Elsie : Was it aa candle?

S : No. This is... the light is here, ~ torc~ 0~ C~~~t.

It's not sleep and waking up?

S : No. It might be a man released from prison. I think that's the one. Usually one gets these four siiniles all together, as when the Buddha meets somebody, he expounds the Dharma, and that person is completely overwhelmed by that experience, by that understanding, that vision, of the Dharma~ and he says: "Lord, it is as though," ah! now I remember, MO it isn't someone eacaping from prison, ;t is the path. It's like the path being pointed out to one who had gone astray, yes. So the person converted~ (inverted commas) says: "It is as though someone had lit a lamp in the midst of the darkness; it's as though someone was freed from a great debt, a great weight of debt; as though what had been knocked over had been set upright and as though the path had been pointed out to one who had gone astray." That is how one feels when one finally sees the truth, the implication being that it's an actual Insight experience. This text~~r(~~t~,~c~ says: "Ignorance is

dissipated and insight remains A li3kt 'i~~O for ever."~ It isn't lost, in other words the experience is tantamount ~oI Insi~~t to Stream Entry. So this suggests that Stream Entry or the arising of Tnsight is a quite definite tangible experience, like entering a dark house with a torch, lighting up the interior of a house with a torch. The symbolism of light, one may say, is a universal symbolism. Light always signifies knowledge, understanding, illumination. We even speak in English of Enlightenment, don't we? These are metaphorical expressions. Sometimes we forget that the metaphors are very powerful, very meaningful. And of course, in respect of those four similes, each one suggests a different aspect of the overall experience. When you speak of lighting a lamp in the midst of darkness, 1th~e ~you are drawing attention to the aspect of understanding, illumina tiVp,~ nd so on. When you refer to it being like being freed from the burde~of debt, what aspect are you referring to then?

: Release. S : Release. What do you think the burden of debt probably represents? : Guilt, karma.

S : Guilt, karma. Mainly karma I think. Karma a~~~ probably includes everything. And what about the setting up straight of that which was not straight, what do you think that re~~rS to~

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S : You could say that. The setting upright of that which was not upright. It suggests firmness, doesn't it? Stability, strength, solidity, immovability. Before, you might have been just lying on the ground, you'd been knocked over, knocked over by lightning, knocked over by Mara, but now you're upright, you're standing firm, secure. And then, pointing out the Path to one who's gone astray, what does that correspond to, what does that refer to?

a : ~iio~n~ r~iis.

S : Yes. You've got a definite direction and there's no longer any uncertainty. You know where you're going, you know what you have to do, you see what ~s~a~~ead. So, these four~comparisons, these four different similes, they give expression to different aspects of one and th~ame experience. It refers, in the words of this section, to the experience of those who have perceived the Way. The perception of the Way, this seems to mean the Insight into the Way, Insight into the Truth, Insight into the Dharma, the actual sort of spiritual, even transcendental experience that affects you very deeply. Alright, let's go orito nineteen. Someone like to read that?

"The Buddha said: "My Doctrine implies thinking of that which is beyond thought, performing that which is beyond performance, speaking of that which is beyond words and practising that which is beyond practice. Those wh6 can come up to this, progress, while tahe stupid regress. The way which can be expressed in words stops short; there is nothing which can be grasped. If you are wrong by so much as the thousandth part of a hair, you will l6se (the Way) in a flash."

S : Well, there's a note added to that by the translator, perhaps you had better read

that. That may throw some light on this section.

"This passage, whether original or not, expresses the essence of Ch'an (Zen), the highest development of Buddhism. Unfortunately, it is impossible to convey the whole sense in translation. A very literal rendering is : "think not thinking thoughts, act not acting acts, speak not spoken words, practise not practising practice." What is to be understood is that none of these four processes corresponds in any way with processes going by the same name which take place in the phenomenal spa here. It is claimed that a full understanding of this doctrine, however, is only within the power of those who have advanced, through meditation and concentration, to the point where they are able to grasp the reality underlying the phenomenal world. In this higher sphere, nothing exists (in the sense that all the attributes of individual existence are illusions pertaining to the phenomenal world), yet everything exists (in the sense that the ultimate reality possesses within itself the power to produce every kind of phenomenon without any limitations of space and time)."

S : Do you think he's on the right track? To me it doesn't really make it any clearer. Let's go back to what the Buddha is supposed to have said. "My Doctrine implies thinking of that which is beyond thought, performing that which is beyond performance, speaking of that which is beyond words and practising that which is beyond practice." I tAink the literal translation is better: " Think not thinking thoughts, act not acting acts, speak not spoken words, practice not practising practice." But can you put it in another way? What is the Buddha getting at here?

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: He's saying the experience is beyond our usual experience. S :
Yes. : There is a transcendental experience.

S : "Think not thinking thoughts." There would seem to be a contradiction in terms if you take it literally, so what is it getting at? "Think not thinking thouhts, act not acting acts, speak not spoken words." Let's tackle it at~ t~teasiest point. "Speak not spoken words," or as also rendered, "speaking of that which is beyond words." No, that doesn't really mean the same thing. "Speak not spoken words." Is the Buddha saying that you should not say anything? You're sure of that? He's not saying that you should observe complete silence? Does it seem likely that the Buddha would inhibit all speech?

: No. S : No. Alright, so what does he mean that you shouldCspeak not spoken words? Perhaps be aware of the limitations of the words.

S : Ah. Perhaps be aware-- of the limitations of the words. Maybe that's getting- at it a little bit. It's as though, on the one hand, there's the extreme of using words, speaking words, but not really grasping their limitations; on the other hand, there's the extreme of not using words at all. So you c?uld say that in the middle there is the middle way of using words, but~with a full sense of their limitation. You use the words but you are master of the words. a The w6rds are not your master. You use the words creatively. Perhaps it's something like that which is meant by "speak not spoken words." Go back from that to "act not acting acts."

What does that mean, then? It doesn't mean you should abstain from action, because how can you abstain from action? That's impossible anyway. So it means something between what is usually understood as action and what is usually understood as inaction. So what could that be? That "act not acting acts"?

: Spontaneous....

S : Yes, spontaneous. When you're not acting consciously in accordance with some idea or rule, the action is spontaneous. So it's as though, in the ordinary sense, you're not acting, but at the same time you are acting, so you act not acting acts. You could say that at the highest level this is not only spontaneous, this is karmically free. You act without producing any karma.

: Why's that? We don't understand.

S : Because there's no greed, hatred or delusion in your action. It doesn't spring from any of those things. It's spontaneous in the highest sense of coming directly from Insight or directly from Wisdom and~Compassion. So you're acting, but you're not acting. So you~re acting in "

accordance with what the Buddha says here: act not acting acts You're performing that which is beyond performance. That other translation isn't a very good one. Do you see the point?

: So it's not the practi~e? . It's not like a ()?

S : No. The Buddha is saying, alright, speak, but don't be trapped by words, act but don't be trapped in actions (that is by way of karma). Act as though you are not acting. Speak as though you are not speaking. Right,

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S(ctd) : what about, then, "think not thinking thoughts"? That's more difficult. The Buddha doesn't mean that you should suppress all thoughts. That is a great point in Ch'an teaching, isn't it? The 'Sutra of Hui Neng' makes that very clear. Even meditation doesn't mean the forcible suppression of thoughts. Nothing wrong with thoughts. But use thoughts, don't be attached to thoughts, use thoughts creatively, don't be a slave of thoughts, be the master of thoughts. To be enlightened doesn't mean to be like a post. A post doesn't think, but clearly you don't want to be like that. So, "think not thinking thoughts" and finally, "practise not practising practice." That presumably refers to things like meditation, pu~a. So how do you practise those without practising them?

: They're a spontaneous.... they come out of you.

S : Yes. The natural, spontaneous expressions of how you genuinely feel. They're not just practices you keep up, either because other people think you should or out of fear of public opinion or whatever. So you practise as though not practising. For you it isn't a practice, it's what you naturally do, it's just your life.

: If you had to put everything into doing your practice~ though, just to keep it going, is that not. ...?

S : Well, yes, of course you do. No, it isn't spontaneous, but it's not that in order to be spontaneous you have to gi~e up doing things, everything. That is one of the extremes. Yes, you have to start off with deliberate practice, you lay a foundation in that sort of way. You come to spontaneity only gradually. It's like learning to play a musical instrument, you can't just take it straight up and play it just like that. You have to practise, you have to learn to play scales, to read music, all the rest of it, and maybe after seven or eight or ten or twelve years, you may be then able to pick up your fiddle or what- ever, or your flute or recorder and just f~e~aly improvise straight off. You'll then be the master of that instrument. So in a way, there's nothing very mysterious about what the Buddha says here. In a way, it's quite clear, it's quite simple; in a way it's another way of stating the parable of the raft, that the Dharma is to be made use of. You get a saying to this sort of general effect even in the Bible where Christ. is represented as saying the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. The Jewish view seeme4to be tha~an was very much made for the Sabbath, but Christ reversed that and said the Sabbath was made for man. In the same way, the Dharma is for the sake of the person who practises it, not the other way round. The raft is for the sake of the person who wants to get across; he doesn't live, he doesn't exist, in order to take the raft over to the other shore. Buddhism is for you, not you for Buddhism, in a sense. In another sense, of course, you are for it in the sense of it as a spiritual, a transcendental principle. But even that higher, spiritual, transcendental principle is not outside you, because it is to be realised by you. You are to become that, but you are for the sake of you. The lower you is for the sake of the higher you. The present you is for the sake of the future you. The unenlightened you is for the sake of the enlightened you. Or you could say the raft is for the sake of the shore, not the shore for the sake of the raft. There is a Zen saying, a Zen master saying which goes something like this, "The Buddha opened his golden mouth and since then the world has been full of bri~rs." So what do you think the Zen master meant by that? "The Buddha opened his golden mouth and since then the world has been full of bri~rs." You know what briars are? Briars are... you tell us.

: Brambles.

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S : Brambles, yes, rose brambles, not blackberry brambles.

S~i~~na: Oh, bri~rs, yes, they can be either, I think. They're prickly.

S : Anyway, they're very long and they've got thorns all the way along them. You can very easily get entangled in them and- you can be ripped by them quite painfully. Sb, "The Buddha opened his golden~-mouth and since then the world has been full of briars." What did the Zen master mean by saying that? It's apparently very disrespectful to the Buddha but you know that Zen masters go in for that sort of thing.

Sulocana : People misunderstanding what he said.

S : Yes. People misunderstand what he said. Right. They trip over what he said.

They make what he said into a sort of stumbling block for themselves. It's very easy to take the means for an end in itself. The Dharma was meant to liberate you, but it's very easy to use it in such a way that you tie yourself up more tightly than ever. It is perhaps useful to ask yourself from time to time whether you are enjoying practising the Dharma, whether you really want to do it because some days it is difficult. But in a sense you must ~enjoy the difficulties, you must really accept the difficulties as- incidental to what you want to do- which is to grow as a human being. Again, to go back to that ' comparison of learning to play the instrument, it isn't easy. If you're practising the violin so many hours a day your arm may ache but you accept that because you accept, you realise, that without that you can't, you won't ever, learn to play the violin. So you ~on~t mind the ache. You accept it. It's part of-the deal, so to speak. So you should accept the sort of difficulty, even the sufferings-, of treading the path in the same sort of way, in the same sort of spirit. So in a sense you not only accept, you enjoy those sufferings, not in a masochistic sort of way, but because you're glad to be doing what you are doing. It shouldn't become a sort of drag, something that you don't know how on earth you got into it or why- you~re ca~ryi'ng on. Sometimes people ~o feel a -bit like that. Sometimes people, even on a retreat, even i~n a community, even in a co~op, they suddenly think; "Oh, what on earth am I doing here? Why am I here? How- on earth did it happen? How on earth did I get myself into this 'mess?'" You see? Packing beans-, or whatever it happens to be. So this suggests that you need to keep the broader perspective in view all the time. You need to have vision.

ck'ri\$tsna: Especially true in co-ops, I think.

S That's depending on the nature of the co--op. C~rIa :
There is perhaps another analogy for your packing beans, is chopping onions.

S Chopping onions! And then you do shed tears, definitely.' But unless you really want to be in the situation, whatever it may be, it won~t really do youi'uch good. And you can really want to be in it even though it is difficult, even though it is painful, because you understand why you~re in it. You accept that. In a way you welcome it. You take the rough with the smooth, you know where you're going and you~re happy in that situation des-pite everything. Even if a deva was to descend from heaven and offer you a place up in heaven you wouldn't b-e tempted!

 : I don't think we go through that too often! S : Right then, let's go on to section twenty.

"The Buddha said:" Regard heaven and earth and consider their impermanence. - Regard the world and- consider~ its -impermanence. Regard spiritual awakenin,,g as Bodhi. This sort of knowledge leads to speedy Enlightenment.

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S : The second part of that section isn't really clear. Anyway, let's deal with the first part first. That's very clear. "Regard heaven and earth and consider their impermanence. Regard the world and consider its impermanence."

Heaven and earth is a Chinese r~t~tr thari an Indian expression. But the overall meaning is clear. Regard everything conditioned, everything mundane as impermanent. Why do you think the Buddha felt it necessary to utter such a truism? Surely everybody knows it's all impermanent? Why do we need any reminder?

: Perhaps the knowledge is impermanent too.

S : Yes, yes, the knowledge of impermanence is very impermanent! You could say that the knowledge of impermanence is the antithesis of craving. Craving implies an ignorance of the impermanence because when there is craving present you want to make C,~~ impermanent as permanent. You want to hang on~o it, whatever it is. That may be possible for a little while but in the long run, it~s impossible, so you suffer as craving runs counter to the very nature of ~~~d~e existence. We went into this question of impermanence very thoroughly in the course of the study and discussion down in London at the LBC a couple of weeks ago. I suggest that those of you who are especially interested ask Sagaramati to lend you the tape of that discussion. We spent at least an hour in discussing the implications of impermanence because it is a very important topic. So this is why the Buddha is represented ~s s4ying: "Regard heaven and earth and consider their impermanence. Regard the world and consider its impermanence. Regard spiritual awakening as Bodhi." Perhaps this means regard spiritual awakenin to this fact as Bodhi. It could be that, otherwise it doesn't seem 0 make very much sense. "Regard spiritual awakening as Bodhi." Well, what spiritual awakening in particular? It could be a spiritual awakening to this fact of impermanence. Insight into impermanence~is enlightenment. Yes, certainly this is one approach. ~ t'ave ~a(t with this, you may remember, in 'The Three Jewels~ the three or the four avenues, so to speak, to the Unconditioned. Through realisation of suffering, through realisation of impermanence, through realisation of selflessness and realisation of impurity. Perhaps impermanence is the easiest and most straightforward, even, in a sense, the most natural. The more deeply you realise impermanence the more your craving will be dissolved. Not that you'll become like a block without desires, but there'll certainly be no neurotic desires, there'll certainly be no craving, or at least craving will be considerably diminished. You may sort of hold things, but you won't hold on to them. You'll be a bit like Blake advises one to be in that poem, what is it? Do you remember, that poem about the winged joy?

: Yes. Kiss the joy as it flies.

S : There are two verses. What does the first one say? "He who binds taihimself a ~oy Dot~ the winged life destroy~ But he who kissestl,e1~~s it flies Lives in ~ternity's sunrise. So that is very much the attitude. If you try to bind a joy to yourself you destroy it. It's not that you shouldn't have the joy, but you shouldn't try to bind it to yourself. It will fly. So Blake says, kiss it as it flies, don't try to grab hold of it and smother it with kisses, just kiss it as it flies, then you'll live in the sunrise of eternity.

Elsie Milarepa's songs say much about impermanence as well.

~OLLt S : Yes, there's a very great deal A impermanence in Milarepa. Do you think, though, that someone reading Blake's poem without any sort of spiritual background could misunderstand what he says? Especially this bit about kissing joys as they fly. Don't you think there is a possibility of misunderstanding?

: Perhaps be a little bit hedonistic.

S : A bit hedonistic, yes. A bit superficial, a bit lacking in depth, a bit casual.

: They could take it to mean that they can quite happily pursue pleasure as long as they didn't hang on to it, but they could go on pursuing it.

S : Yes. Just kissing one joy after another, sort of thing.

Sulocana : If all of them do that and don't pursue it, but pursue; vi~ means they never actually touch the joy.

S : Blake doesn't mean to eliminate joy in life, neither does Buddhism. Joy, in the sense of a pleasurable and positive emotion, is not unskillful but it's the trying to bind it to oneself which is unskillful, trying to hang on to it. It's sometimes very difficult to have the one without the other. To have the pleasure without the craving or the clinging. So, regard spiritual awakening to the fact of impermanence as Bodhi. "This sort of knowledge leads to speedy Enlightenment."~that is to say, speedily leads to Enlightenment. What are the sort of areas, do you think, in which people hang on, or tend to hang on, to things~they shouldn't perhaps hang on to?

: I was thinking just now, I don't know if it applies so much these days, or in this culture, but I was thinking of when this was written down, even though sometimes people seem to accept the fact of their own coming death, if they have children and sons, it's sort of like you can achieve immortality through the traditions as you. So I wondered if it was a bit of a reminder that even that won't guarantee sort of...

S : Yes, right. Well, one does get that sort of tendency, the tendency to try to achieve immortality through one's descendants in all ancient civilisations. It's very, very strong in India and it was certainly very strong in China. Perhaps it still is. It was very strong among the Jews. That through your progeny you defied mortality, you defied death. You might die but your line would continue. Your sons' sons' son would keep alive your memory~your name, for the infinity of Smiths, Jones and Browns! I read not so very long ago that there was still living in China the direct lineal descendant of Confucius, in the direct male line, continued for two thousand five hundred years. That's almost a record! But you've got similar lines too in India among Brahmins and high-caste people. That reminds me of an English eccentric, an English eccentric, had a coat of arms made showing Adam because he claimed to be directly descended from Adam.

: Was it shaped like a fig leaf?
been, yes.

S : It might have

: Or with apples.

S : It was an apple, I think.

I ~~~ic tlti~~~~ w~'ti~ A ~~~l~etS£ o~ &~~~~~ 'i~hv ;~t~

~n~c~k~f~~LSft~tW~tiIt c~n~t~~t b~rin~ ;~ ~,, sn'tno(of ;art~r~&~~~~e - I~~st~ to S,'eed~

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~rtSa : I was thinking the things and the places and the people we know very well and have got to know, you think you can leave them, but actually it~s very hard.

S : But leaving is in a way a somewhat different matter. When you leave the thing remains and you go away, but in connection with impermanence it's as though you remain but the thing goes away~ leaving you. Sometimes, of course, both leave simultaneously. I think very often people hang oij[,to themselves as they were.

: I notice that a lot when I talk about myself to other people:I realise that in fact the things I'm saying aren't true. It's sort of me as I was six months ago or even a year ago.

S : Sometimes people hang on~~o their youth. They won't accept the fact that they're growing older, they have grown older, they've lost their youthful oom etc . I think that's a very difficult realisation for people.

: Parents won't accept that their children are growing older, changing.

S : Yes, want to keep them in the cot. Very often one doesn't like to go back to places that you knewjLn the past and find them changed. You expect to come to them just as they were and - you may feel very let down when you go back and you find that they're completely different. But you expect to go back and see the old familiar house standing, no, ~t~s pulled down, there's a block of flats there now. A few weeks ago som~one drove me past what used to be Belmore Street in Archway. For some reason or other they wanted to show me where the centre had been, but there isn't a Belmore Street any more. The very street doesn't e~xist. One can't even tell where the street was. It's all completely built over. So if one isnVt prepared for that sort of thing, fond memories cling about the places with which one was associated in one's childhood or one's youth, then one is~ isappointed, L

very upset, when one sees the changes that have taken place.

: I find that also quite good that,~I find that a new motorway has been built in an area I know and I go down it, it's like you see it from a completely different angle. It can be quite refreshing actua~lly.

S : It's as though, if you can think that those places are still there unchanged it's as though you could still think that you are still unchanged.

Sulocana : I went once to see where I was at school when I was about three~ and the house didn't exist~ it was just trees and things~rowing, and yet, it was very strange because in my imagination that house existed more real. I knew just how it was. I mean it didn't worry me at all to see. It wasn't sad, it was rather surprising.

S : You have it in your mind.

Sulocana : The house was still there. I knew all the passageways and yet there were lots of trees and things. You get layers, don't you?

S : Yes.

Stes~"e : Sometimes I find the other extreme a bit disturbing. Like if I go to a place, go back to a place which I was familiar with and the people seem to be there just the same and I think, how can, how could they? It seems like the antithesis of growth or something.

S : Yes. I think I mentioned, I don't know if it was in this study group or the other, that whenever I've been back to India, recently, anyway,

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S(ctd) : It's been possible to go and see old friends in the very places in which they were living twenty-five, thirty or more years ago. They haven't moved, they're occupying the same house, they haven't changed~very much physically, they don't look very much older, just a bit older. In a way it's a () well, thirty years have passed and more. They don't seem to have changed.

(end of side one)

S(ctd) : .. visiting a few of my friends,~esPeci~Qy in Bombay, v~ry slight changes, like somebody said~well, I hadn't seen her for three or four years, she said: "Well, don't you notice that I've got a different set of cushions on that settee~" Just little things like that over altogether thirty-five, forty years perhaps. You look, yes, there are little differences. Those things have changed. Otherwise everything else is the same, the same ornaments, the same pictures, the same books, the same arrangement of furniture. There are just one or two little changes, that's all. But even so, yes, even though it isn't very obvious, things are

changing, things are changing. You can't really arrest the process.

: Seems a really strong tendency to do so. It seems like unless you get into it, like, change, that the whole purpose of life is to sit and build up security around you, stop it from moving.

S Yes. When I came back to Europe before and then when I went on the Continent driving through in '66 with a friend, we stayed overnight at one or two sort of, what would you call them? Camping sites, much nicer than that. But I couldn't help noticing there were so many people, mainly English people and Germans, who were driving around with their big cars and trailers and caravans and all the rest of it and the whole family. They took not only the wife and children, they took the dog, they took the TV set, they even took the canary! They had everything with them. This really struck me. You take the whole household with you on four wheels, so you continue to be surrounded by the same things; some of them even had armchairs with them! Are you familiar with this picture? You are a bit. The idea of having a holiday, just going off with a little bag or some t~ingike that didn't seem to appeal to them. You had to take the whole bag of domestic tricks along with you. There were these big dogs, sometimes two of them. I suppose it's wanting to feel the same, ~~~ want security.

Punyavati : Like habits. We cling to habits. They give us security. Probably find it hardest to let go of them, even if we stop actually wanting to do them, we find ourselves doing something over and over again.

: When I lived in () while I was there I found it really very strange to realise that that town would stay mostly the same for the last so many hundred years. Like Melbourne, in the time I was growing up, just grew the entire time. I realise my concept of a town is one that sort of goes like that.

S : Is still expanding.

Carla : One way in which it's been quite funny watching Ben and Abbey grow up is that since they've been born their human contacts and relationships have been very steady and the same, but they~ve lived in four different houses because of squatting, in five years, so their conception of places is totally different from like say, M~ who grew up in one house in one place. And they kind of go from place to place with no, it's just no worry, I think that probably they're happy because their friendships

have remained constant.

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S : I think it is important that one does have, let's say, constant relationships with people. I don't mean relationships that remain the same, but relationships in which there is continuity of growth and development. I think

human beings probably do need that. Certainly you need it when you are young. The fact that one recognises change and impermanency doesn't give the fact, doesn't mean, that one should sort of be breaking off all one's relationships of whatever kind every five minutes. No, that has perhaps a very deleterious effect.

You must accept change, certainly, accept impermanence in relationships too. But that does not preclude continuity of relationships. One kind of relationship may turn into another. A romantic relationship may turn into a relationship of friendship. I think it's a mistake to think that you can remain free, free from e~ta,nents~ by consciously breaking off relationships with people or constantly changing your friends. I think that really is going to rather an extreme. I don't want to provide a convenient rationalisation for attachment and clinging obviously, but nonetheless, one does need to build up almost continuous relationships at least with a small number of people.

: That does seem to me to be one of the problems of swopping countries.

S : Yes. No one knows that better than me! Because at the age of nineteen I cut off all my relationships and contacts and went off to A

India. After twenty years there, I cut off all my contacts and relationships there and came again back to England. So I know that this can be a very strange sort of thing, especially when you're half way through life. You're provided with a completely new set of relationships. It can be quite odd. Well, it's not like that now because I've resumed a few of my old relationships in India. At least resumed a few of my old contacts, one might say. So there's a certain amount of continuity. But for a long time there was a great break as it were, right in the middle. I think this isn't, in a way, a natural sort of thing. So keep up old contacts by all means, but let there be continuity of development. You don't have to have exactly the same kind of relationship all the time, expect a certain fixed pattern to be created and maintained.

: Sometimes impermanence can give you the impression of being like a butterfly, kissing some things, but not actually settling down anywhere.

S : A realisation of impermanence shouldn't preclude depth in one's experience or in one's relationship with people. It's not an easy sort of middle way to follow. It's a sort of tightrope almost. I mean, you mustn't get attached, or maybe I shouldn't say 'mustn't get', if you get attached you'll suffer, but you cannot avoid the suffering by breaking off relationships with people. You generally work on the attachment and try to deepen your relationships, try to put them on a more genuinely positive emotional basis, so that if a parting does happen, well, you'll be sorry, but you won't be devastated, you'll just take it for the time being your paths have diverged. When you meet again, well, that will be fine. You'll look forward to meeting someone day. Although if one is attached, the idea of someone going off for a few months might be being with other people, well, that might fill you with despair. You might just feel left, abandoned, lost, deserted etc. etc. But if your attitude is more positive, more creative, you can just wave goodbye quite happily, 'see you when I see you'. It doesn't imply lack of depth in the friendship. You may keep contact in other ways, either by writing letters or remembering that person in your daily metta bhavana. So it's not easy to have depth in one's relationships without attachment beginning.

Attachment is quite a different thing from depth. You haven't got a deep relationship with someone just because you're clinging onto them very tightly. If anything, that sort of relationship is shallow. There's

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S(ctd) : real depth in the relationship, real affection, if you can, so to speak, let that person go. Even to speak of letting go is inappropriate because who are you to let go? You're not their master or their mistress or their boss or their owner. But you can kiss the winged joy as it flies and let it fly on its way. Some people would rather pull the wings off the butterfly rather than let it fly away, yes, they would! This is sometimes called love. Yes, you'd rather pull the wings off the butterfly, deprive someone of their freedom, so that you can just keep the wretched little worm that is left in a jar for your very own. This is what most... I ~m sure you've all done it at some time or another! I hope none of you are doing it now! But you know exactly what T mean, don't you? This so-called love can be so cruel.

Sulocana : Children too, who have a very good relationship, are very free to come and go, they don't cling.

S : Yes, really they are. They will feel really secure. Sometimes the parents aren't happy with this. If somebody says to little Johnny, ~d4,~~A~~ "Would you like to come and stay with me for a week?" and he says: "Oh, yes, please," Mother might feel quite hurt. But that is the natural reaction of a child who has been positively brought up,"~'w"ho doesn't feel insecurity. &

: Ah, but it causes () mother anytime.

S : Mother begins to see her occupation going. What will she do then, poor thing? She will have to look after herself, have to twiddle her thumbs and wonder what to do next. Maybe console herself by thinking, "Ah, well, I can always start another baby." Well, yes, actually a woman told me this last year, I think. It wasn't a woman inside the Friends, it was a woman outside the Friends. She said she was really feeling quite bored so she was thinking of having a baby to give herself something to do! Well, it isn't the best of motives. So, sort of lightness in one's attitude to life, people, things, places; but depth at the same time, continuity at the same time, sincerity at the same time, not shallowness or superficiality,~~triviality. Twenty-one.

"The Buddha said: "You should ponder on the fact that, though each of the four elements of which the body is made up has a name, they none of them (constitute any part of) the real self. In fact, the self is non-existent, like a mirage."

S : Now, how literally is one to take that? The four elements are earth, water, fire, air. The body is made up of those. Each of those elements has a name, but do they make up a real self? What does one mean by a real self?

: Something fixed and unchanging.

S : Something fixed and unchanging. No, they don't make up anything fixed and

unchanging. The so-called personality, the so-called individuality, 's~ flux, it's changing all the time. So the ego, we might say, - ls~ we can't say 'thing', but it's whatever it is that tries to arrest the flow and sort of tries to group the flow around itself except that of course it is itself a flow, even though it doesn't know it, so to speak. t&'~t ~n The Buddha is supposed to say~the self is non-existent, like a mirage. I think one should be very careful about using that sort of language or be very careful how one understands that sort of language. It is not that the self is totally non-existent. It is non-existent as a permanent, unchanging entity. Empirically, you are very definitely here. How can

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S(ctd) : you say that you don't exist? ~hat would result in a sort of alienation if you started really thinking that. You do exist, but not as anything permanent and unchanging. As a process, as someone in a process of change; not only change but transformation. I remember some years ago, there was a girl came to one of our very early retreats and she was a student at Reading University where I used to give lectures on Buddhism sometimes. So, she was very much drawn to Buddhism on account of the anatt~ doctrine. This is what had really gripped her, as it were, c&ught her imagination, if you like. So she had said several times it was that that really drew her, the anatt~ doctrine. Anyway, in the course of this retreat she realised, she told me, why the ana¶t~ doctrine had so attracted her. She understood the anatt~ doctrine in Theravada sense of there being no self. That the so-called self was completely non-existent. That where the self was supposed to be, there was just a big gap, a big hole, which people erroneously thought of as the self. But anyway, she said in the course of the retreat she understood, she realised, why she had been attracted to the anatt~ doctrine. She said it was because she hated herself, she wanted to annihilate herself. She wanted ~hat~heshould ~ be~her~~~ So the anatt~ doctrine, as it were7tsai~~toshM?tr~eCl , y~~@~~0~~t~t~er~~ So her hatred ach~~~~ed its object, she'd wiped herself out. So she realised this. But this is nQt what the anatt~ doctrine really means. It doesn't say that there's no self, that you don't really exist. There's no permanent unchanging self. You do exist but as a process. You are in process of development, growth, change, even transformation. So, one should be very careful how one uses expressions like ' the self is non-existent'. This can lead straight to alienation.

Th~~' S very relevant to relationships, isn't it? Because if you're not a fixed entity and the other person isn't a fixed entity then really every time you meet it's two different people meeting.

S : Right, indeed, yes.

s~r~ant~ : It can be quite confusing because you wonder why it was so different last time or why you see somebody who you thought you liked a lot and suddenly you just don't feel anything.

S : Well, either they've changed or you've changed or both.

S~~~artt'~: There's that saying ' you can't cross the same stream twice.'

S : Right. If you're lucky you both change at the same time. It's like two people

galloping along on horseback to keep abreast, t~'ve got to keep on galloping. If one stops, well, they're no longer abreast. You've got to keep up with the other person. The relationship between you is dependent upon a process being kept up. It must be very dull having exactly the same kind of relationship with someone who apparently hasn't changed year after year, even decade after decade. Where you just get more and more firmly settled down into a particular kind of rut, especially perhaps after retirement, when the children have grown up and left home. You settle down into a slow death, you just rot. I'm afraid this is the life of some people, unfortunately.

Punyavati : It's very sad because I've heard of ~as and seen some people where they actually end up hating one another when they get~o that state. I think it's really sad that two people should live for about thirty or forty years and not even have any positive feeling left for one another. ~ 're S : ust together out of force of habit which they cannot break.

Yes.

S of 42 S D6 Tl 13 ~2o Some people even grow to look the same. : They grow like their dogs!

: They did a set of experiments once on people's attraction for each other and measured all sorts of things like the breadth of their neck and weird things like that~ and there was an amazing level of coincidence.

S : This suggests that love is simply narcissism. You wouldn't li~efto do some experiment~i work wtt~n~tAe ~w~O? There's still a few couple~£~or you to work on!

: I found that really fascinating~that narcissism thing. I saw the play 'Knots', the R.D.Laing thing, and there was a line in it which said Narcissus saw his reflection in the water and fell in love with it, thinking it to be another. That started me thinking. I couldn't quite see somehow how he related to the other and whether there was another. It's all tied up with projections, isn't it?

S : Yes.

In a way if you fall in love with another, what are you falling in love with? I didn't come to an answer but it's very... I find it really fascinating. I suppose you fall in love with what they show you of yourself or what they bring out in you.

Carla : Perhaps the ~rarts of yourself that you haven't yet developed. I think it's usually&more frequently the parts that you've su~essed and haven't actually dealt with.

S : What is unconscious is projected. That's the sort of psychoa~~al axiom that what is in you is unconscious you tend to project; so in a sense, yes, through projection and through falling in love, to the extent that falling in love involves projection, you come into contact with another part of yourself, but not as with another part of yourself,

as with another person; we think it is another person or an aspect of
 or feature or quality of another person, and that is in many cases
 what binds you very strongly, & you feel that that other person is yourself.
 Well, you think that it's another person but your feeling is that it is you~
 and this is one of the reasons, of course, why you cling on so much, why
 perhaps you feel so devastated when the other person goes away, like a
 part of yourself going away. One might mean here, perhaps, something
 a little, what shall I say? Taking some risk, one might say that a light
 projection, if there could be such a thing, is useful in coming into contact
 with parts of yourself of which you are unconscious, provided you can just
 keep it light and recognise that, well, this is actually something of myself
 which I projected. It doesn't really belong to this other person. I must just
 make use of this opportunity to get in touch more with that part of
 myself. If it's, let us say, a very heavy projection, well, you may
 understand what is~ happening intellectually but you just don't really feel
 that it is so, and so you become just a victim. But yes, perhaps, I say it with
 all the necessary warnings, perhaps a light projection might be at times
 of some use. You~see what I'm getting at? -
 t~at b;t nccic or I feel that I about the same size~

S : You can wear his shirts then!

MLah : But you can , I've noticed I used to be attracted to people who were in
 a way quite similar in build and a certain sort of physical similarity. And then that just
 changed. I was actually attracted to people who had qualities I kind of felt I could develop
 and that
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(ctd) : physically they were very very different to me which previously I'd never

S : Now you mention it, that is quite odd, because I remember two or three years ago I
 was looking through one of these Norfolk daily papers, one of the local papers, and you
 probably know they devote pages upon pages to photographs of local weddings. On one
 occasion I remember thinking how alike the bride and bridegroom looked in almost all cases,
 almost as though they were brother and sister. It was quite odd. The same type of features,
 the same type of build and so on. What it means I can't begin to think, but I couldn't help
 noticing it. Maybe it is an element of narcissism.

Punyavati : I also notice it with people living together, married. Usually married
 couples start looking alike and even behaving in a similar way after a little while, even
 physically look alike as well.

S~Lti~~ wh~~ I Vajragita : ~ -walking with my brother, with my brother, they
 thought we were a couple, we were married!

Sulocana : Yes, I had that difficulty when I moved to Germany with my brother. I was
 only about fourteen but they put us in the same cabin. We were.... joke' ,LbtL S : It really
 suggests that~odd things go on between ~o,le. There's a sort of strange weaving back and
 forth, all sorts of unrecognised factors.

: There was the sort of bits like marrying someone something like your father, or

: Sometimes it doesn't make a person feel that they want to hang on to that person. I don't think it necessarily makes them want to cling.

S : If it's a question of projection, well, I've said, well, perhaps there is a possibility of a sort of what I've called light projection, but if there's a very strong mutual projection of which you are unconscious, you get sort of locked, I think, in a sort of psychic embrace that's very difficult to break. It can be obviously reinforced by other factors. Anyway, how did we get onto this? Via narcissism?

: The self. S : The self. But how did we get onto this from the self? VOi'es : Seeing it as unchanging.

S : Seeing it as unchanging. But how did we get off (Lo it from seeing the self as...

: Well, there's two changing selves that's connected with the way relationships go.

S : I think that's what they call technically 'inter-personal dynamics'! But whatever it is, remember the, well, first of all remember the fact of impermanence~ and bear in mind that that applies to the so-called self. It applies to you. You are changing, everybody around you is changing, therefore, surely, relationships change. They must; even though there is a sort of continuity in the relationships with other people~ the relationships themselves do change. The nature of the relationships must change. A good example, for instance, is maybe parent and child. You can have a relationship with your parents which lasts fifty or sixty years but

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S(ctd) : the nature of the relationship is changing. It starts off with utter dependence and it ends, hopefully, with being a relationship between two quite independent individuals. It may even end up with your parent, your mother or your father, totally dependent upon you due to old age. So there's been continuity but within the continuity there's been great change.

~t~e~Ane: It ends up with two old people~in fact, doesn't it? It's quite funny, it occurred to me the other day, I was standing at the bus stop with my mother and I said to her: "In eight years time you'll be seventy and I'll be forty." It seemed incredible the two of us could be that old.

S : Sometimes you do find mothers and daughters ending up together and getting older and older together and in the end it's just like two old sisters, one a bit younger than the other.

Maybe sometimes the daughter~starts looking older than the mother. And the relationship can change so much %ometimes the mother can become not only physically but psychologically dependent on the daughter. The positions are completely reversed, So~~~~~

: Especially if you're landed with all your mother's projections about what she couldn't do.

S : Oh, dear! In D~~H.Lawrence'Sstories there are several instances ofj couples virtually, but they consist of mother and daughter and their own sort of relationship has remained stable and they usually live together even though their various other relationships, with husbands and so on, have been very unstable. But mother and daughter stick together and get older and older and sometimes in D. H.Lawrence~sstories, more and more disillusioned and bitter together. Sometimes the daughter breaks away very late. Mother is left on her own.

Sulocana : My mother had a terrible saying, she used to say to me: "If you have a son, he's a son until he gets him a wife, but a daughter's a daughter all her life." I really used to wonder about that.

S : It sounds like a life sentence, doesn't it?

: I think it's nice. I think it means you've got a bond of affection, that's how I see it. My mother says that. Perhaps sons cut off from their families more, their mothers and fathers, when they get married, whereas daughters continue to have bonds.

S : One wonders what it all means! But it is true that in quite a number of cases after marriage ot man becomes to some extent estranged from his mother in a way, perhaps, that a daughter does~~ t. So, also, though, the wife is the rival of the mother in a;way that a husband cannot be a rival of the mother. There's something - - quite complicated. But in some ways, yes, in a way, you always are a daughter in the sense that, well, biologically you are related inTh~~~~.articul ar way. The same, you're always a son, you're always a brother, always a sister, whereas you're not necessarily always a husband~always a wife because divorce and all that can intervene. But even if the technical, biological relationship remains unaltered, the actua~concrete relationship can change very, very much. One might even say it should do. Mother doesn't have to be always mother~sychologically even though she remains mother biologically. You don't have to go on being daughter psychologically even though,yes, biologically you are, of course. That can't be changed. Biology can't be changed~psychology can. You have~~~~range examples of, let's say, parents coming into the FWBO through their children. In a way, they become the disciples of their children. Like the Buddha's father became his disciple, a complete reversal of the relationship. He was still his father biologically, but

actual relationship is more important. The actual relationship can change, should be allowed to change, if not encouraged to change. You shouldn't be psychologically son or daughter all your life, that would be terrible. It would mean you never grew up. So, the self is non-existent, i.e. the self changes and should change for the better. Alright, twenty-two.

"The Buddha said: "There are people who, following the dictates of their feelings and desires, seek to make a name for them- selves, but, by the time that name resounds, they are already dead. Those who hunger for a name that shall long be remembered in the world and who do not study the Way strive vainly and struggle for empty forms. Just as burning incense, though others perceive its pleasant smell, is itself being burnt up, so (desires) bring the danger of fire which can burn up your bodies in their train."

S : So, there are two things here, the desire for fame and why you should desire fame. What is the desire for fame? It is the desire for some- thing which is really very temporary, very transient.

\$te~ka~~c : It's a bit like a desire for self esteem, isn't it? yo~ wot4IA S : You can~tjhave, in a way, no esteem for yourself. You can only have it at the reflection of other people's esteem. It's like the TV personality who's sort of well-known for being well-known. You try to convince yourself of your existence, so to speak, by becoming well-known, through your consciousness that a lot of people have heard your name. I~~s hardly more than that because you can~~ be known personally to more than quite a limited number of people~ but you're said to be famous if a lot of people have heard your name and heard it constantly. So you get some sort of reassurance, even some sort of security - from that, thousands and thousands, maybe millions of people repeating your name every day. I~~s as though that strengthens your feeling of your own existence. 'Ah! I exist now, so many millions of people know me, I'm famous,~ and people strive for this fame. Do you think strivi~ for fame can ever be a virtue? How about striving for good name? ~ ~r"e~~st and Romans thought of striving for fame as a very noble thing indeed, to be remembered for your heroic deeds for hundreds of years.

Carla : The distinction is between being remembered for your good deeds and striving to be remembered for your good deeds. If youVre remembered for your good deeds which came from honourable motives, like the Buddha, that's wonderful, but towap~~tAat in itself~

S : I think, in the case of the Greeks and Romans, many of them, certainly, they strove and performed good deeds so that they should be remembered and that itself was regarded as noble. It's quite a different sort of point of view from ours. So how does one see that? How does one view that? Was it really noble or were they grossly mistaken? The noble deeds usually consisted killing other people, sacking towns, enslaving people.

(nationalistic?) , '~t;~~~I;~c. S : Well, it wasn't even - k - It was usually tribal. There are some lines in Milton. Milton says: "Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise, that

last infirmity of noble mind." The 'last infirmity of noble mind'. It sort of reflected something of that classical attitude.

Would you repeat that again, please?

S : "Fame is the spur that the clear spirit"[actually it should be ,profl~fle~

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SCctd) : 'sp~rt'-'doth raise, that last infirmity of noble mind. I think it's in ~c'd~£.

: I thought Cthe last c,,~j was death'.

S : That last ~irmit, the last weakness of the noble mind. Wh&n a noble mind gets rid of weaknesses one by one, gets rid of all of them, the last one to go is that love of fame, according to Milton. "That last infirmity of noble mind."

: Is that also the power you were ta~lking about - -- that would be the last?

S : Might be. ~asg : Or is that pride? S : It's a sort of pride.
: It's wishing people to think well. : Isn't that a strain of immortality of ourselves as well?

S : That does seem to be a very strong element in it. Immortality can take the form of sons and grandsons or of people's memories of you. You don't die, you~re remembered, so, if you~re going to be remembered, well, presumably you'd like to be remembered for some noble deed.

(end of tape)

S(ctd) : It might be better not to, as it were, drop the actual near and dear friend, the neutral person and enemy but, as it were, ma be do a longer first stage sort of sub-dividing it. More metta toward j~~~Self~ metta towards the self that I like, metta towards that part of myself I'm pretty indifferent about, metta towards that part of myself I dislike, and then go on to the near and dear friend etc. So, when it's a question of that part of yourself, so to speak, which you dislike, you must try to see why do you dislike it - on objective grounds or not. Because it may be an aspect of yourself that you were better rid of, so one can't quite think in terms of developing metta towards that part. You can only develop metta towards the - part of yourself~o~ didn't like if that part of yourself was nonetheless a quite valid part1 but due to conditioning or misunderstanding of one kind or another-you experience some difficulty in loving1 directing VviCtt~ If it was your unskilful part you can't very well direct metta towards that, it's more a question of eliminating it in a sense. But certainly one could do a more elaborate--metta bhavana towards oneself. Just so as to make sure that every aspect of yourself is well and truly soaked in metta.

Sulocana : Would it eliminate it if one directed attention to it with metta?

S : You mean the unskilful?

Sulocana : Yes. It would then become seen.

S : It would be seen, but what does one mean, directing metta towards, say, one's unskilful actions?

Sulocana : Well, then it would not be unconscious and so how could one...

S : Supposing, for instance, you knew quite well that you had done something really quite unskilful. In what sense could you feel metta towards that part of yourself? Would it be possible?

Sulocana : At least it would give it attention and make it conscious so that it wouldn't be unskilful.

S : But suppose it was conscious, supposing you did it consciously and you know it? Let's take a rather extreme example, something rather nasty. Supposing, out of sheer vi~ciousness, that you'd given a slap to a small child (you see what I mean?) and then you recollected that when doing the metta bhavana. In what way, or in what sense, could you feel metta towards yourself as the doer of that action?

Sulocana : Well, understanding why you did it and being careful not to do it...

S : But understanding why you did it in what sense? In the sense of sympathising with yourself?

Sulocana : No, because you do it unconsciously. If you are conscious of the reasons why the child does something then you don't slap it.

S : So it wouldn't really be metta then. It would just be a question of becoming aware of why you have acted in that way. I don't think you could literally feel metta towards yourself as~performer of that action.

Sulocana : No.

S : You'd ir~~ly be ashamed of yourself. Do you see what I mean? You might not lose your overall metta towards yourself. In fact you would be ashamed of yourself in that particular respect because of your metta towards yourself generally. Because what you ha~done was not

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S(ctd) : compatible with the rest of your personality or with your~ideals. But even so you wouldn't hate yourself.

Sulocana : You might.

S : You might. Well, you shouldn't go on hating yourself, anyway. Certainly you would repent, you'd regret...

Sulocana : Try and be more aware before it happened.

Elsie : You would confess.

S : Yes, you would confess.

: Maybe it's more a c°~~ of feeling metta towards your faults or your shortcomings in the sense that sometimes, like, I know with myself, there are certain things that I think are faults and if I mention it to somebody, pluck up the courage to say, well, the other person quite often doesn't think they're that big a number and sometimes when from yourself you may think something is negative or at fault in you which isn't in fact that bad. Maybe it's a case of feeling metta towards those areas rather than actual things that you'd done.

S : Mm, yes.

Carla : I don't know b~t possibly () guilt &,,4 hkc tktAt. ~OU ~Oh'~ t~~hk ~So? S : Doubtful. I think it's a sort of competition in which I wouldn't care to enter! There's quite a lot of guilt around on both sides of the sexual divide. It would be a very dubious honour that one sex had more than the other. No d ubt women have got quite a lot, well, Western women anyway. (I won't? leave Indian women outW~Eastern women and Western women or let us say especially English and American women. Well, women in Southern England anyway! You must be very careful not to over-generalise. How often people start speaking to ~~~~ut women. Sometimes women start speaking about women andistart7'~!~~'Does this really apply to all those women I've seen in India, all those Tibetan

women I used to know in Kalimpong?" No, it doesn't. It only applies to a particular section of Western women. The same with generalisations about men as such. And ex-Christians, possibly ex-Catholics and so on. (So, about this guilt thing?) It's very prevalent in our society, unfortunately.

Sulocana : Though a man wouldn't have a similar experience in that they very seldom take care of very small children constantly, do they? From morning to night.

S : They take care of the mother and children.

Sulocana : Yes, but not constantly. Taking care by getting away from them
~~ tt'c-i S : . jeel ~;tt~ 0~~~getting away~ leaving them all day.

~~o'q'c t~~nk : ~they do.

S : If you want to feel guilty you will find something to feel guilty about ()
rat;~~i:t~

There's just one thing about using yourself in the metta practice. Some people have asked me about this. In some cases I felt it would

make them quite self-indulgent as well. I wonder if there is a danger of bliat?

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S There is, I think, not exactly a danger but there is ~anger of misunderstanding what metta is. When you direct metta towards yourself it doesn't mean that you feel a sort of narcissistic self-satisfaction or complacency. It isn't that. Metta is something bracing. Perhaps you should say in that particular situation: "May I be happy. May I be well. May I evolve. May I make an effort" and so on. It's not a sort of feeling of satisfaction with yourself as you now are. That is not metta. Perhaps one needs with some people to make that quite clear~ that metta doesn't represent a sort of narcissistic pseudo- emotional sentimental indulgence. Sometimes you can actually see this. I remember that from the times I used to take classes in London. You could actually see ~eople sitting there and from the expressions on their faces, tiic~ Io~so self- satisfied that that was actually the sort of feeling that they were experiencing. You could tell.

: I'm talking about this particular person who likes to talk about himself a lot and I think using himself in the practice is going to make him feel more self-indulgent and the only thing that seemed suitable was actually trying to feel some positive feeling towards someone else or take himself out of himself.

S : Well, I think one would find that everybody who takes up the practice has some difficulty with regard to one or another of the stages in particular. It may be the first, it may be the second, may be the third, may be the fourth. One just has to make quite sure that when

one is explaining the practice, one makes it as clear as one can what metta actually is. It is not a feelin~ of f~satisfaction, it is not just sentimentality i do sn't have~~roticfe~~.~etc. Anyway, coming back to thi~e""sire tor fame. Something occu~d to me, something I read a year or two ago which was this:- that with regard to the United States, with regard to criminals in the U.S.) especially murderers, those who'd committed~savage or rather dramatic murders and it was said that the following morni~g, after they'd been arrested and locked up, the first thing that they asked for was the morning pape~ and they looked to see whether their photograph was there on the front page. If it was they were very, very pleased. If it wasn't they were annoyed and upset as though they had been treated unjustly. And the point was made by whoever wrote the article or had done the research, that it was as though many of those people had murdered as much as anything for the sake of t~~ celebrity, getting their name in the papers, in other words, for fame. And usually because they were very disturbed characters, psychotic, maybe very insecure. So, one might even sort of wod~rwhether the desire for fame in some cases is a sort of narcissism,~~ en you look in the mirror and see your own face and fall in~ love with it9 in the same way when you are famous you hear your own name echoed and you sort of fall in lOve with that. You just love hearing people repeat your name. There is an element of this in some religious circles in India, I think in China too, traditional China that is to say. When some well-to-do person gives a some of money in charity he asks that his name should be mentioned or featured or figure very prominently. If he gives the money for a hospital it must be in his name and sometimes such people in India say quite bla~ntly without any sense of shame: "I don't mind giving the money but my name must be there." They say this as though it's owing to them, it's only right that their name should be there.

Elsie : You find the names engraved on stones.

S : Yes.

People used to do that over here, didn't they? When they paid a lot of money to have a church built or something. Lots of paintings with a

nice little portrait of the donor.

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SulocA~~ : Or a seat in the garden.

: Or hospital beds.

S : Well, no doubt there are varying degrees of narcissism and if you want to commemorate a friend or relation, well, thatls a different thing to you wanting your name put there. Because sometimes you want to commemorate your father or mother in this way, it is a sort of collective family narcissism, one might say, in some cases. But the desire for fame, it does seem to have, in some cases at least, a sort of narcissistic to recognise yourself everywhere. Just like some people will go carving their name everywhere or having a stamp with their name on it and it everywhere. You get this sometimes, don't you? You can want to see your name or you can want to hear your name as though it reinforces the sense of

your own identity which suggests that your sense of your own identity is a bit shaky, that it needs reinforcing. So therefore the Buddha says: "There are people who, following the dictates of their feelings and desires, seek to make a name for themselves, but by the time that name resounds, they are already dead." So think of the futility of it—those who hunger for a name that will be remembered in the world—do not study the Way, strive vainly—do struggle for empty fame. After all, what's fame? It's just a breath. If one studies history, or if one studies the history of literature, you are constantly coming across the names of people who were very famous in their time, whom everybody knew and people thought very prominent, and a great poet or great writer—but in modern times, when their name does occur it needs a footnote to tell you who they were because they've been completely forgotten. There are many such instances. Sometimes people that did achieve fame after their death did become famous.

famous, are remembered, and these people were not only not known in their

day, but to the extent that they were, were even despised in comparison with very famous people that we now have completely forgotten because they didn't really do anything worthwhile at all.

Carla : Dickason spent something like twenty years of solitude in her own house and her poems were only published after her death. No one heard of her at all. She wouldn't have let anyone in if they had heard of her.

: Is fame, then, something to do with being known? It's a very immediate thing and you make your mark on the world.

S : There is such a thing as posthumous fame. Some people are content to work for posthumous fame. That's a more refined form of desire for fame perhaps. They don't mind not being known in their own lifetime if only they can leave something, some book or some deed that they will be remembered for in future by future generations.

Carla : Even to leave anything at all would be a desire for fame whether it was in your name or not.

S : Well, if that thing could be recognised as yours. We have the modern convention of signing books, but in ancient times, books weren't signed. The authors weren't known individually. Books weren't books, you might say. There was more a tradition of anonymity. We don't have that nowadays. Perhaps it's significant. We don't really know anything about Homer. Homer is just a label attached to the 'Iliad' and the 'Odyssey'. 'Homer' means the author of the 'Iliad' and the 'Odyssey'. We don't really know who Homer was. We don't know anything about him. We are not even sure where he was born.

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: It doesn't really seem to matter either.
yo%A ~wo~ S : It doesn't seem to matter. In a way, Homer, whoever he was, through his poems. According to some scholars, of course, two poems have different authors. According to one scholar the

'Odyssey' was written by a woman.

But does it matter?

Sulocana : It says in the beginning of this book that it may not be authentic,- or something like that.

S : Well, authentic in the sense that first of all there is no Sanskrit sutra which we have now of which the work is clearly a translation. As I explained in the beginning, it is as though probably these two - - translators took different passages from different works and put them together in this form. And again, the work seems to have passed through the hands of some Zen people at some stage or other and they have added some quite clearly Zen touches. But, in a sense, does it matter? Because in any case you can't be absolutely sure the Buddha said anything at all in such and such precise words. The general drift and trend of the teaching perhaps, but precise words, no, you can't be sure of those. Again, does it matter, in a sense? You have to take the words, the teaching on their own merits. If they are helpful-well, the Buddha himself is supposed to have said this according to the Pali Canon and it is not the sort of thing that one can imagine people inventing and attributing to him-that if it conduces to one's spiritual development, well, take it as my teaching. So one is justified in doing that. But perhaps we are often, certainly in the West, too anxious to affix our own name to something. All the squabbles about copyright.

: It's more about money than fame, though.

S : Yes, very often. But we perhaps feel - supposing we wrote a poem and it was published without our name-and suppose people thought it was written by somebody else, well, we wouldn't be too happy about that, would we? That somebody else was getting the credit for our work.

~ve : But wouldn't it depend on what the poem was trying to communicate, the motive behind your poem or something? because if it was a poem that is - - inspired, it wouldn't matter if you had that attitude. It would depend on your attitude, I suppose, to your works.

S : Well, if your attitude was rather positive you certainly wouldn't be happy with somebody appropriating your work, as it might seem. Of course, people shouldn't appropriate somebody else's work as their's, that's dishonest but that's a separate question~ and presumably one wouldn't just be shocked by someone's dishonesty. "They have taken my poem, that's ~ poem that's being printed under their name."

: I know I felt that way when someone looked - I think it was a salad, actually. They made the salad which I'd made up and they thought they had made it up and I was put out!

You feel it's yours.

~~~~~ r ~~~~~ga~ S : Well, in a sense it is, in the sense that you've

done it, you've made it-  
account.

but you shouldn't be possessive on that

Steph'hae: Sometimes if something is recognised by other people, well, I find this anyway, if somebody, if other people seem to like something I've done, I get a feeling of self-esteem out of that, even if nobody knows it was me that did it. I think that's a kind of separation of the self-esteem and fame. It's still more important to me that other people like it

than just I like it, but it doesn't matter whether they actually know it was me.

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S : You can be happy that other people like it in a quite positive way sometimes. ~ou are happy in that it has given pleasure to them in a quite disinterested sort of way, you are happy to have done something that people can enjoy.

Elsie : You're giving a Dharma talk and you find that they're benefit%ing frdm it.

S : Yes. But even then you have to be careful that you don't start thinking, well, what a good Dharma talk I've given, but you can have a disinterested sort of joy in the good that you ve done in whatsoever way. Perhaps it's also salut'ry to remember how long fame lasts anyway even if you become very famous, well, what does it mean? How long is it going to last? Very, very few people are remembered by many people years or centuries after their death. Very few are household words, very few names, like Alexander the Great or Julius Caesar, there's just a handful of them. But what about all the conquerors and rulers and so on of past centuries~ ~itt'r r'aMC~ in many cases are completely forgotten, known just to a few specialists in certain periods of history. In a million y~~r~s time will anybody be remembered? Perhaps the planet will not be here. Perhaps the universe won't be here. So what is fame after all,£if you do achieve it? ~ntthis is what you work for, this is what you put all your energy into, all your efforts, just to be famous. And nowadays people don't even work at it in a genuine sort o~qw~a~ As I said, the TV personalities, well-known for being well-known. to""t~ of people like that. They exist, as it were, only on the TV. OLS &it~( And some people like knowing people like tha7, don't they?

S : Yes. Because some of it rubs off 0 to you3if you are associated with a well-known person, well, to some ex ent, or to that extent, you yourself are well-known. A little of his glory is reflected oT\to you.

&iris~ : Being seen- in the right places. S : Someone came to see me in he was Swiss by birth, he had been Kalimpon~ A~0 in India many years and had become a sort of Jain yogi. He was a very tall, quite impressive, but really quite 5~~i~~\$~7~gi Sri George3 and he had two massive photograph albums with him whic he carried around with him everywhere and one album contained photographs of himself with all

sorts of prominent personalities. There were dozens upon dozens of them, because in India it is not very difficult to get yourself photographed standing beside, or in a group with, politicians and so on. He had several hundred photographs of himself with everybody almost of any importance from Pandit Nehru downwards. And then he had this other album containing photographs of all the palaces and mansions he had stayed in at different times in the past twenty years and he would insist on showing these two albums to whoever he met and he would go through these albums while showing the pictures to people. It seemed so ordinary. ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ most precious possessions.

Walter : I was thinking of the photograph album I show people and it's got old pictures of (Marion?)

: I was thinking how easy it is ( ) fame with pop singers nowadays. They just come and go every six months or a year.

Carla : And it's such a shock when they're gone.

S : Yes. Occasionally you see in the paper or in the colour supplements on Sunday, the story of someone who was very famous at one time and now they are living in a bedsit and they are collecting the dole every week. Anyway, let's go on to twenty three.

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231 "The Buddha said: "Wealth and beauty, to a man who will not relinquish them, are like a knife covered with honey which, even before he has had the pleasure of eating the honey; cuts the tongue of the child that licks it."

S : - - "Wealth and beauty which are possessed. Beauty does not mean, presumably, one's own beauty but the beauty of others which one possesses. So : "Wealth and beauty, to a man who will not relinquish them, are like a knife covered with honey, even before he has had the pleasure of eating the honey, cuts the tongue of the child that licks it." Usually of course, it's said that pleasures are like a knife smeared on a razor blade. Maybe one should qualify that and say unskillful pleasures or pleasures which give rise to unskillful mental states. This verse goes even further, this saying goes even further. Even before he can taste the honey, the razor blade gets you in the case of wealth and beauty when you cling to them. But it does make this very necessary point that to the extent that craving is present and grasping is present, things which are pleasurable or would otherwise have been pleasurable, become a source of suffering. Again, it goes back to not binding the winged joy to yourself but just kissing it as it flies, so to speak. You can very often find that if you really grasp a pleasure tightly it will hurt you, it will result in suffering. Whereas if you adopt a more detached attitude towards it, it can be a source of pleasure, perhaps. If you are greedy about food, well, you may have a very enjoyable meal, but you will end up with a stomach ache or worse. Whereas if you'd taken a more aware attitude and enjoyed the food in moderation you would have enjoyed it without any unpleasant after effects. But I think one shouldn't understand this saying as meaning that pleasure is inherently bad or inherently painful. There is such a thing as pleasure, but if you insist in hanging onto it, it can turn into pain, it can turn into suffering. But it seems vigorous comparisons of this sort are necessary because it's just the sort of thing people do. They grasp so firmly, but

what they are grasping or trying to grasp just wounds them. I have heard people say, in the case of human relationships, that at the beginning when things are a bit light and carefree, a relationship can be a happy thing, but when it gets closer and tighter, people are sort of more bound by it, but in a way they get less pleasure or certainly less happiness from it than they did at the beginning, because they are grasping. There is a sort of law of diminishing returns here. The more you grasp at pleasures, the less pleasurable they become, very often. So keep it light without letting it go, and remember what Blake says. Remember that joys have wings. Why do you think wealth and beauty are mentioned? What do you think are meant by wealth and beauty?

very

: Well, they're both attractive.

S : Wealth is material possessions. Beauty clearly implies people with whom one is involved emotionally in a subjective and even neurotic sort of way.

Could it also be about beauty other than of another person? It doesn't seem to specify anything about another person, does it? Maybe it could be more

general as well.

S : In that case, what could it be? : Beautiful surroundings.

S : Beautiful yes, furniture but wouldn't that be surroundings 'k beautiful included in the wealth, do you think?

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Could be.

S : Maybe they overlap. Sometimes the beautiful wife is like a furniture, you might say. Sometimes if the piece of furniture is really beautiful it is just like the wife, vQ,,a~ J(AS~ ~5 Aj~tij~.

c~r;~~~: Could be the person's own beauty and the idea of losing it.

S : Could be, from a narcissistic point of view.

~tepA~~~a: It suggests material abundance here, doesn't it?

S : Yes. Luxury.

: As regards - the question of wealth, beauty or whatever one might have of value, do you think it's a good idea to make a will? Oi'. S To make a will?~ Well, put it this way, supposing you don't make a will, what will happen to whatever you happen to have?

: Well, there are certain rules that say it goes to this person and that person.

S : Goes to your next of kin. : Goes to your parents a~d your children. ,J~ei : You might worry about it, ~ot bejs9 i'at ~ ~ositi~n to do a\$~t~tth~ ~out ~ S : What might you worry about?

~btl : You might feel that you're not particularly attached to your wealth, but on the other hand you know you can't take it with you when you go, so ought one to make provision?

Carla : It's quite an emotionally strong experience when you do sign a will. I've done it. I've also torn it up.

In ~.~~2t ~~~~ ~PoI' S : Because it really means that you're facing,~efact of your death. A will means what happens to your property after your death. Some people refuse to make a will. Theya1mo~t think it unlucky. They say once

you have made your will you~~~£c~~t~in to die quite soon. But if you don't make a will your property will pass to your heirs, I mean, in accordance with law, the near~~~ relations will inherit, children or parents or whatever. Tf you don't want that to happen then you have to make a will saying what you want. So one can regard making a will as a sort of act of dana becau~e~y"o~ are giving away your wealth, you are actively giving it away instead of just letting it be taken away from you, you might say. I made a will some years ago when I went to India just in case anythin~ ha~?ened in flight, because if I didn't whatever I happened to have~ ~£~~i t was only copyrights of books> would go to my next of kin. I didn't want that to happen. I wanted that it should go to the FWBO. So I made a will accordingly. I think it probably is advisable to make a will; even supposing you wanttLt~ whatever you leave should go to relations, it is probably better t~ make it clear that those are, in fact, your wishes. It's also a useful exercise in the sense of reminding one of the fact of death. It's quite a simple thing to do. It's better, of course, to have a solicitor to do it for you because there are various pitfalls to be avoided. It isn't very expensive. When I made mine it cost me £18. It's probably more than that now.

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Mtwibtr~ s~o'&i~ &Csie : Someone suggested +S~t Order A make W~Il~) also suggesting how we'd like to have our bodies disposed of, like cremation,~e ~t,'er~se - S

~~)t~~ftVh regard to that matter, you don't need to actually state it in your will. What you should do is to name an executor~ because the -executor has~ the resp~ibility, the legal responsibility of making the arrangements for the funeral, deciding whether it's cremation or burial or whatever. You can name a relation as the execut6r, you can name anybody as an executor, and i~~5 a question of letting the executor know beforehand what your wishes are. If you die without a will,'~yon you die intestate, that is to say your next of kin automatically have the final say. If you haven't left a will and if you haven't named an executor other than your next of kin, your next of kin automatically executors and therefore have a final say. Therefore, suppose~yonr next of kin are all Christians, you don't make a will, you haven't named an executor, they automatically, on your death, become executors ,~~ they can decide how your remains are to be disposed of. If they want to have a Christian burial, there's nothing that your Buddhist friends can do about it. There is nothing they can do at all. So if you want to make sure of a Buddhist cremation, you must make a will naming a Buddhist executor unless you know you can fully rely upon your next of kin to carry out your wishes. But you can't even be sure who your next of kina~e ~oing to be at the time of your death because some of them may die,&~ ~ 'Yremote relations that have never even met may become your next of kin and who know nothing of you at all or of your wishes. There was a case very early in the history of the Friends when someone wh~I knew quite well died, in fact he committed suicide. And he left a letter for his parents saying that he wished to be cremated; it was only a letter, not a will, and he left a letter saying he wanted to be cremated with Buddhist rites. They just ignored it. They had him buried in o~Or~~~cS ~Ji~&t Church of England r2t&s.

S"f~an~ : But does that not make it a will because he signed it?

S : No, except in emergency cases as in the case of soldiers on active duty during war, no. Simply to leave a letter even if you signed it doesn't constitute a will. That's why it's advisable to get a solicitor to do it.

You can actually get a good form from the post office. It explains quite clearly some of the things.

S : That's all right for a simple will if you just want to state ' I leave everything I have got to my dear husband' well, that's enough. But if you have a whole lot of things and you want to leave different things to different people or under different conditions or on different conditions~ then you will need to ~'te ~ ~OI~c;tor But anyway, the moral is, make a will and name ~~ executor and if you want a Buddhist cremation, a proper Buddhist send-off, well, name a Buddhist executor. Don~~ leave it to chance. In the case of Vang#~isa he did not leave a will, but his wife was familiar with his wishes and certainly didn't want to oppose those, but had she wanted to she could have done. The wife is automatically next of kin, or husband, if one is married. After that I think it~st~cfchildren, after that I think it, ~ parents.

~rj& : Better name two executO~S S : You can name any number of executc~s, ~crl~ no : Do they all have to agree?



S : They have to agree to be executor. I don't think they have to agree in any legal form but you 5h0i~as%r~dt~ey have any objection to being an executor.

(end of side one)

S : I~ explained things as they are under English law. There is a possibility that the law of other countries is in some respects different. It's probably ( )

: How important do you think it is to make sure you have a Buddhist funeral? I mean, important from the view of the person who dieS?

S : That's quite a eOL'nt. Is it just a matter of sentiment, so to speak? It does seem, in-the light of Buddhist teachings ~ what happens after dea~£c~a1n~ be a supportive for the, let's say, departed 4 expe~ience consciousness, to feel or even&see that there are people remembering him or ~r~nd reminding him or her of the teaching, utd Caat~n~ a rDsI~tIv~ which i ~supportive. Many teachings and traditions do suggest thatt4cco,is~i,~~ though~~'a6cfl~~issociated from the physical body, does remain around, so to speak, for some days and is conscious of what is happening, and in a sense attending its own funeral if t?~&t~not too long delay~d. I certainly have ~od quite a number of experiences of this sort myself in connection with deceased people being around which weren't just subjective, I'm sure. So I would say, yes, if you feel that you might be glad of that sort of support, yes. I don't think the question of cremation or burial matters very much but that you should be reminded of Buddhist teachin~ or feel the supportive metta of your friend~. And no doubt a funeral can be very often a very uplifting s ~rt%f~0cc~si0~ People can be in a very heightened state of consciousness~anif they are thinking of you too, well, you too can conceivably share in that, indeed, be really supported by this. Though probably on the whole it's desirable that one should have a 8uddhist funeral or ~uddhist send-off ~~~t does not necessarily mean it will definitely be a cremation or definitely anything else in that sort of way, but certainly that you're being well and truly reminded of the Dharma as you depart. That could certainly be helpful. If you have already gone so far along the Path that it doesn't matter, well, what about the people left behind? It can still be a very uplifting occasion for them to remember you in that sort of w~y. It's sometimes true that Buddhist funerals, or better, send-offs, are-nne of our best and most positive experiences and most meaningful experiences. I think many of you were present at Vang~isa' S.

: That was certainly true of Vang~isa' s.

S : I was sn'. ~,,heard about it only afterwards. But it was a very, ~r, mean~~t~  
cc'~~~ion for everybody concerned And also what about friends wAo about~re~lations? ~  
lei~ ~~~? What It can be very helpful for them. Carla : Vang? isa's wife  
and family were so relieved to see that he was so loved and cared for.

S : Yes, indeed. They didn't realise that, I know. It made a big  
difference for them.

: You could see what a difference it si~e to tl't~,

Vajragita : Is it also helpful for somebody to have a Buddhist funeral who is not  
a Buddhist?

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S I don't think it co'tk~do any harm unless it w~s a virulent Christian or  
Muslim and in the after~deat~~th~ey were looking down, so to speak, and  
seeing they were being given a Buddhist funeral!~Y' m sure anybody who  
wasn't sectarian-mind~ feeling conscio~~ hey were being  
remembered with good will, couldn't but be happy with that. ~L~'d( ~?D~~~  
~~ ~ee4n~ ~~jfr ~o~ bt'h~ Carla : A friend whose mother was dying of  
cancer was told when she died to tell her to see Christ above her head, to  
visualise Christ in perfect white, purity and warmth just above her head to help  
her approach it with more equanimity. I thought that would be an appropriate°t,~~  
her mother. Would her mother freak out if she heard the Buddha? ~Csee'~~ better  
than -

S : It would depend whether y0~~ as the person who suggested she did  
that~ could really say it with conviction or if you just said it because your  
mother might like the idea. Perhaps there's not full honesty there if  
you don't really believe in Christ, let us say. What could one say if,  
for instance, one's mother hadn't ho~ &~y ~&~'~ ,ri the Buddha?

: ~C~M~II~,

S : ~I personally wouldn't. I'd suggest the person just remembered those things in their  
life which they had done which were skilful or good. This is a traditional Buddhist practice.  
Remember your good actions and reflect 'I have performed some good actions, I have done  
some good deeds; that is good karma and I can feel happy on that account and since I've

performed these good deeds I have nothing to fear after death.' This can make a solid foundation. Some Buddhists go a little bit to extremes here; some traditional Buddhists do-keep a sort of record, A written list of the dana they have given~and at the time of death this is read out to them with the same sort of idea. That you gave two hundred rupees to this vihara or so many hundred rupees for -the gilding of that image~or on such and such an occasion you've fed two thousand monks. But you can see the idea here, that you remember and you may need some help in rememberingatt~~~~he good deeds you have done and this would give one a sort of positive reassur~ce.~~ course, if the person hasn't got much in the way of good ~e~srwe~l, it makes it difficult, doesn't it?

: ( ) chanting ( )?

S : Chanting is helpful because very often in the case of the dying person the sense of hearing goes after the sense of sight. They may not be able to see anything but they can still hear so it's good tf chantjn~ ~~ doe'..

Carla : Not allowing the person to go anywhere near a hospital but to remain at home.

S : Well, ideally, I suppose, depend~"l on circumstances~ but clearly dying in the midst of positive surroundings, that is what one wants to ensure. If it's, for instance, if it's in a private room ifl a hospital with full medical attendance plus access to all friends and relations, maybe that's another matter. But if you are in a ward with a lot of strangers and rather impersonal doctors and nurses and just b~hS ~~~pc~~ ft£ii ~~~rM~\$ - well, that isn't really vi~~ ( ). Or t~ - you're just being kept alive against your wishes. I think if anyone fears that might happen they should take a one-way ticket to India, and just go off somewhere where people just don't bother whetheryo~ die or not. Just go and stay~i~,s,,,m0~~~~ittl~ hermitage or cave somewhere and just close your ~oo~, ~ust don't take any food and just die. That would be much better. People wouldn't bother you probably. Instead of being shunted into a hospital and

drugged stupid. That doesn't seem very pleasant.

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~nyfv£ti: Also itls quite strong Christian conditioning that conditions there as well. Most patients have lockers with Bibles, New Testament (there?) and a resident (preacher?) there as well and if you are a Buddhist there is no helpful encouragement. A few months ago I applied for a job, - nurS,,, on night duty, c~ct~ people who are actually dying,~tA1~~twast~mt~C~~~~ Cancer Foundation - and they're quite strongly Christian-b~ased;and normally they don't ask you what yourreligion is but in this particular -- - they did~ask me and I said I was a Buddhist and didn't get any reply at all. But I felt that I didn't get the job because I was a Buddhist and it's dealing with people dying where there'd probably be really strong Christian support which I wouldn't have been able to do.

Carla : They have hostels, don't they?

S : Or hospices. I think in principle that a good idea. Perhaps we  
-should have our own in due course

: ~...If you open the women's wing, I'll open (tA. i°%LM ~ maybe at that age you won't  
bother about men's and women s -

: ~he ~~~avao(jn Sangha in Melbourne is planning to buy some land out in the  
countryside so that older members could go ~nd ftr~ o~t tJtCre and die.

S : I think that's very sensible. Maybe the ~~t£on of Padmaloka ~~(I ~raA~11~ 'A~~e  
a ~k~e to see venerable old gentlemen and maybe venerable old ladies tottering  
along~ do~~~~ p~~ - on the garden seats~' ~~ftM~ &o\$4~~ pL(~ totk£~~at four o'clock with  
a cup of tea and saying: "Oh, theyt ve passed on!~" Sitting beside the lily pond in the  
afternoon sunshine after having had your morning's puja and meditation. No nurses, no  
doctors, no drugs, no medical equipment- (

Carla : Sounds-really pleasant!

S : So, does one really want to hang on for a few extra weeks or months of life, or even  
an extra year or two? No, one really doesn~t. So let's have a sort of Buddhist hospice. I  
think quite a lot of people way outside the Buddhist movement feel in this sort of way. Quite  
ordinary people, they don't want to be kept alive in that sort of fashion. They don't mind  
dying, in many cases~ they're not afraid to die, but they're afraid of being kept alive against  
their wishes. They're afraid of that.

Carla : Very much so.

: I think my two worst fears are dying under those sort of conditions or being alone. a"  
S : It wou~n t be so bad being alone unless you actually needed practical hel in getting  
aroun~ or4~~~~0,,r 'ie~ oooke~ . 'tOu could die quite hap~ on yo4~(~~11~~~~~ the  
practical necessities of life. Well, you may need some ~elp even though you are certainly not  
on your last legs and can maybe still do some worthwhile work. I think people ought to face  
the fact of old age, disease and death with much more realism.

: It seemed strange to me last week when I went to ( ) intensive care where there  
were two people kept alive on a machine and people were bustling about, very busy and there  
was pop music blaring in the background and I thought... oh, I felt like going over and just  
throwing it all away. I felt I didn't want people just dying like that. Because there wasn't  
anything much left in the man. At least he could

have died more creatively, positively, if he had been let go of in the normal way, but in some  
ways I felt it was too late for him to go (

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S : But I don't know whether there is any legal question as to whether you

would be allowed to leave people without medical treatment.

~,,~~;e: There was a play out about that. It was called 'Whose life is it anyway?' I think it was Alas ~ckbc'arn . A man was paralysed from the neck down, he was lying in hospital and he was really pissed off and people, I think the doctors said: "You're depressed," and he said, well, It's 's'ot surpris~n~'. But he got a solicitor in saying: "Well, I'm being more constructive, I want to get my affairs in order," but actually he got a writ, I think they call it, of habeas corpus which meant that he had the resp~sibility for his own body, but they let him stay in the hospital. So there was a funny deal where they let him stay there but they didn't have responsibility for him so he was able just to die and of course various toxins built up in his body and he just died off. ~t w~s very good actually. I thought they made too much light

S : I have heard of the play. They might have even made it into a film. I haven't actually seen it.

: There was a lot of joking about his situation~which was a bit unrealistic, but it was quite interesting.

S : Well, it may be better to joke about it than to feel morbid or fearful~because if you can joke about it you sort of exorcise his fear. Maybe we have to go a bit in the opposite direction because there has been so much morbidity and fear surrounding the subject of death.

~is,, : If the doctor's treating someone doesn't his ~ippocratic oath say that he must....

S Well, I discovered only quite recently that doctors in Britain no longer take the ftippocratic oath. No; but it's true what you say about the Nippocr~tic oath, but i~tTW~v0e~ just formally signed<sup>3</sup> though the article in which I read it~\*0~t~e majority of pedple in Britain still believe the doctor still takes the )tippocratic oath but ~n fact he does ~t do that any longer and has not done so for quite a number of years. They just dropped it quietly.

Carla : In fact, in Britain, you have a far better chance of dying without being kept alive by the aid of a machine than you do in the States where you've got private medicine and if they can get another penny they'll do it. Unfortunately it's far worse there than it is here

S : Maybe India is the way out. Maybe we have a really nice hospice in India and people just take a one-way ticket and spend the last, maybe, the last year or two there.

Carla : Wonderful. ~c't. S : Live on and live very simply~an~ have it in a nice place, not too hot.

: Even in ordinary families when people die ~o~ can just go in and see the body and they're surrounded by a lot of positive feeling.

S : Well, I remember not only the Indians but the Chinese in ~alimpong. There was a Chinese cemetery because there was a small Chinese population, and on the anniversaries of days on which people had died, the whole fa~ilyt,~CBuddhist family, used to go to the graveyard and they'd have a picnic on the grave . They'd burn incense~hey'd have a picnic at the same time~and they'd offer part of what they were eating to the deceased person, but they'd all tuck in, (the relative?) tucking in together with them and it was a happy, cheerful, jolly affair.

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Elsie You can get all these colourful - - decorations to decorate them to make everything as cheerful as possible.

Vajragita : I remember when my father died I went - with my mother to the

) A~ ~ooA 'f4'~, ',,k~n~ ~t ~£ ',~~(£n

S : In Holland is the attitude to deat~ the same as it is in Britain? Ordinary people's attitudes? Are they a bit sort of morbid, unwilling to face facts?

Vajragita : I think so. Oh, yes they can be.

S : I realised this in Kalimpong because a friend of mine died~ She was an Englishwoman who'd become a Buddhist about six months before she died. She was about fifty-four or fifty~five. She'd had rather a sad life. Anyway, she ended up in Kalimpong, she became a Buddhist and she knew a lot of people in Kalimpong~including Christian missionaries. So she died accidentally. She got up early on~orning and went outside to visit the toilet but without putting on her ~p~c~ac~~~~,Vt4~ell and struck her head against a cement post and died. So,, I came back from Calcutta, I think it was, in the afternoon ~nA she~died in the morning. Anyway, there was a big dispute to ~;~ ~l, 6- - ) because some of her Christian friends claimed the body and I maintained that as she'd become a Buddhist the body belonged to us. Anyway, I was able to prove that the body belonged to us and (departed?) in triumph~and we laid it out on the ping-pong table in the games room because it was the biggest table we had ( ). So I thought, as she had known the missionary people, though they were Christians, it would be proper to invite them also. So we invited them also as the custom ( ) and look at the body. So several of them did come~ even though it was a Buddhist centre (they usually didn't enter such places!) Some of them came, some of the bolder ~"~)rso~ gave the ~a an~ after giving them tea ~44 "Would you like to come and see the body ~~~hTh 'no!" There were all my Nepalese students and Tibetan students, al~ teenagers, they were all in L£he too~ ~tt r,~~t, - there having a good look: ( ) the missionaries just wouldn't SIou~~ S~Ll ~~~t7Ib?' look. They were scared, it was quite clear, though they were missionaries - ~roble~~ and some of the~~ministe~)4~They were scared. I must say they weren't Catholics, they

were Protestants; maybe Catholics are a bit different. But anyway they just wouldn't look, they didn't like the idea of looking at all. But local people, even the youngsters, had no such feelings at all. It was quite a natural thing for them that they should look at the dead body, just pay the last respects, as it were.

Ann : Well, it will communicate itself to the dying person if they knew that the minute they died everyone was going to back away from them.

S : Yes, it might well communicate itself to them. But it's certainly not the case in India among Buddhists.

Elsie : In traditional Chinese culture some keep the dead body for seven days just to allow people to see it, and then they bury it.

S : Well, not only that, I'm told I have heard and I've read that formerly among the Chinese, if you were a bit well to do and a bit respectable you bought your own coffin in good time. Yes, and you kept it proudly in the sitting room and when people came to see you, you would probably show them your coffin: "Look, I have my coffin at home, - it's really good."

Elsie : ( ... ) especially next to their wife or some of the people that's close, and initially at the time of their death what they do is ( ... )

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S : So it shows quite a realistic, practical, no-nonsense attitude towards death. It comes to all. Why should one refuse to face up to the fact? Just accept it. It embodies the fact or the truth of change in a quite dramatic form.

Carla : I think my mother was a bit unusual though, for Western European society because at the tender age of six, our father and mother died and of course she had to drag my younger sister and me to the funeral to make sure we got used to it. It's quite interesting though. She did take us ( ... ) so we'd see bodies and stuff or people dead. So I've seen quite a lot of death ceremonies.

-t, 'u, 'ot, ... '4L'~ S :  
 Anyway, make your will, order your coffin, get your own little stupa made by hand and make them yourself. Make your own stupa for your own ashes and you can keep it on your shrine during your lifetime on the understanding that this is to contain your ashes after death, ... /QSS you want your ashes scattered in a rose garden or in a river or anything like that (or sent to?) New Zealand.. - Otherwise they'll be enshrined in that little stupa and placed in the shrine or wherever else you wish them to be placed. Why not? Make sure it gets done properly. Using the best wood. You may have a little brass plate with the name you wish engraved! Perhaps we'd better leave it on that nice cheerful note! Because on twenty four, twenty five, we come on somewhat different

aspects.

~t'ff de&t ~;~~ t1~ft ta~~orro~

(end of tape)

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: "The Buddha said: "People who are tied to their wives, children and homes are worse off than prisoners. A prisoner will be released sooner or later, but wives and children have no thought of betaking themselves off. Why dread to lose them? (Otherwise), you are tamely submitting to the jaws of a tiger and deliberately allowing yourselves to drown in the quicksand into which you have fallen, thus merit~ing the name of 'simple fellows'. If you can enter by this Dharma Gate you will rise from the dust and become Arhans."

S : you Wa~~ to translate that into corresponding terms~ ~ut really the Buddha here is addressing either monks or hos~1yho w~nt- to be monks. "People who are tied to tee~rcAko4~~medMsare worse off than prisoners." Do you think there's any truth in this?

Vot~es . Yes, yes. S : But do you think it's true the other way round?

Voice~ : Yes, yes.

S : That people who are tied to their husbands, children and homes are worse off than prisoners?

: Yes, yes. S : So you think it Iworks that way round too? As long as you are tied down by anything.

S . As long as you are tied down by anything, yes. But why does the Buddha especially mention being tied down to wives, children and homes? Or husbands, children and homes? Why do you think this is especially mentioned?

~~~e~won' t ~e th~ possibility of Going Forth.

S : Yes. Well, again this raises the whole question, I don't know if we discussed it in this group or the other, to what extent Going Forth needs to be a literal process~ and to what extent the Going Forth is essentially something that takes place in the mind. Well, there's clearly not much point, there's not much value~in a merely mechanical or formal Going Forth.

But what degree of actual practical Going Forth is necessary? This is really quite a question. One might even ask, well, is it a question of either/or?

- - When you go on - retreat leaving behind you either wives, children and homes, or husbands, children and h0meS,well~ then you've Gone Forth, at least for a month or for ten days or a weekend.

Do you see- what I mean? So no doubt one needs to attach, well yes, importance to Going Forth, but what does one Go Forth from? And to what extent does the mental, the spiritual Going Forth need to be reflected in an actual physical Going Forth? Is it, one might say, correct to describe those who are tied to their wives, children and homes or husbands, children and homes as being worse off than prisoners? Are there no redeeming features at all?

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: You have got the possibility of leaving, haven't you? Whereas a prisoner...

S : I didn't mean that.

Sulocana: Only if you're not a prisoner.

S : Only if you're not a prisoner, yes. So the passage seems to assume, or perhaps it doesn't, but it seems to assume that if you are tied to wives, children and homes you are necessarily worse off than prisoners. Is that so? Or is that an overstatement?

Marlene : You could have a husband, children and home without being tied.

S : Ah, but of course the question arises - well, how do you ever really know? It's like saying, well, I drink tea every day. I can give it up any time I please, but how do you know unless you actually do it? Perhaps this is where the temporary Going Forth comes in. You just go away for a few weeks or even a few days and you watch your reactions. You see how you feel, whether you can be really happy away from them all. Do you see what I mean? "The prisoner will be released sooner or later, but wives and children have no thought of betaking them- selves off." This no doubt is to be understood within the context of the joint or extended family, in a situation where there's no possibility of careers for wives, and where children may remain at home even after marriage with their children, and you are still responsible for the running of the whole show. Do you see what I mean? This is the sort of background here. The family just goes on getting bigger and bigger and since you're the seniormost person in it and there's no possibility of the wives going and working

independently or living their own lives, well, so long as you're there you have that responsibility. You can only get away from it by just walking out, leaving your eldest son to take over.

Stephanie : It does seem to be talking about practical responsibility to some extent, because they say they have no thought of betaking themselves off. If it was simply talking about mental attachment, you wouldn't want them to take themselves off, anyway.

S : Yes, yes .u~for maybe both. I~mean you may be very attached an js~ me ime they also may not be thinking of betaking themsel es off. Probably one may say that the family responsibilities in India, certainly in ancient India, were much heavier than they are in the modern West. No doubt that has both advantages and disadvantages.

Marlene : Wasn't in India also the idea, at least for men, that after a certain time they could leave their family and devote themselves to...

S : Well, not only for men actually, because the system was

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S(ctd) : that when your children were grown up and when you'd handed over t hersp onsibility for maTfl~aging the household affairs~c~&st~Qe~sons,~~arried sons, you and your wife retired into the forest. And that was the third stage, the stage of () The fourth stage was when the husband left even the wife in the forest and wandered. She could do the same thing but that seems to have been very much rarer. But not many people went through all four (~3~r~~~~ as they are called,in this way, the (~~r&~~) of the celibate student, the(as~~a) of the married householder, the (~~r~~~) of the forest dweller and the (~~~L) of the wandering mendicant. This was the scheme. It was quite a late scheme introduced into orthodox Hinduism sometime later than Buddhism, partly under Buddhist influence. Some historians see it as a sort of compromise between the Buddhist view of things and the Hindu view of things. I mean Buddhism, of course,did hold that it was quite legitimate, in fact highly desirable and praiseworthy, to skip (~~r~~~) two and three, to go straight from being a celibate student to being a mendicant wanderer. But the Hindus, the Brahmins, that is to say, especially, insisted very strongly on the importance of household life, and they tried to postpone the Going Forth for as long as possible. There's no doubt, though, that there are dangers in premature Going Forth, just as there are dangers leaving it too late. But do you think people nowadays in the West do feel tied down by domestic life, let us say? Is this true or isn't this any longer a problem? Is what the Buddha says here, or is supposed to say here, irrelevant? Is it out of date?

Trish : I don't think so.

S : You don't think so. me

Trish : This was brought home strongly~when I visited a cousin of mine I hadn't seen for a while. We were the same age. And he had a wife and a child and a second child on the way. And he was talking about getting a second mortgage so he could extend his house, and it suddenly dawned that he was going to have to work for so long to support that, whereas I was free to come and go:

Marlene : But isn't there a point where you can only feel tied down if you sort of also have the feeling there's something else? And a lot of people in this country do see marriage as being fulfilling in itself. So maybe they don't feel tied down in it.

Trish : Well, I don't think he felt tied down, because it was what he wanted to do, but he was certainly bound in the way that I wasn't.

S : - Had he changed his mind at a later stage, it would've been rather difficult for him to extricate himself from the situation.

Sulocana: I was talking to someone who obviously was interested

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(ctd) : in Buddhism and who had read a lot, and he was talking about the seven-year itch- that every seven years, seemed to be actually wanted to do this, leave his wife and family. to S : Oh, I thought you meant~take another mortgage?

S~t.c~~~ : No, he thought it was the correct thing to do after seven years of caring for them.

I think it's also in India. I know Padmasuri was talking about meeting Indian women and they feeling quite tied to a certain expectation of them. Sort of tied to their homes, well, wanting more or~taob1~o things on their own. It's quite common, I suppose, in both East and West.

S : I'm not so sure that it's very common in India, actually. I think one ~tc' be very careful about generalising about India~ and inaybe especially about Indian women, from talking to a few who know English. I think one must be very careful about that. I think the majority of women in India are actually quite satisfied with the domestic situation. Maybe they'd like a little more money or maybe they'd like nicer clothes, but basically I think °t)~~ are 5a~LS~Cd -- that situation. I think a lot of women in this country are. I think one shouldn't overestimate the number of, as it were, liberated women. One might even put the 'liberated' in inverted commas. So I think one really has to, sort of, face the question of whether domestic life is necessarily and completely and always limiting from the spiritual

point of view: I mean you have to come to some sort of conclusion, because what are you going to tell people? Say, if people are coming along to the Centre, if they have wives and children or husbands and children, are you going to say to them, 'You've got to give up all that sooner or later in order to develop'? Or are you going to say, but honestly and truthfully, that they can develop within that situation? Do you see what I mean? You have to be very clear about this. So in this particular passage the Buddha seems to be saying (if it is the Buddha speaking; we can't be completely sure of that) that real spiritual development within the domestic situation is just not possible. At least if one was to take the saying at its face value it would seem to mean that, but is this necessarily so? And is it necessarily so here in the West? I think we have to be really clear in our thinking on this question, because people are going to come and are going to ask us, sooner or later, after they've come to a few classes or a few retreats and so on, what are they to do? So what is one going to say?

: I think the important thing is whether you are able to change within a particular situation.

S : Yes.

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~~~~~;~: And if you find that you do change so that you no longer want to be there, then at that point you might decide that you have to make a choice.

S : But also whether you're able to bring about a change or at least a modification in that situation itself. Do you see what I mean? Suppose you are able to meditate twice a day, even though you are living at home. Suppose you are able to go on retreats. Suppose you have got time for study: Well, it's not such a restricting situation as might appear from what this particular section says. If a point comes when you feel, well no, even that situation, advantageous as it is, is still not good enough, well then you may consider Going Forth. But I think it would be extremely unwise to suggest that no one can develop at all within that sort of situation. Well, not only unwise, I don't think it would be true to say that. - We assume of course sincerity and honesty on the part of the people we are speaking to, but I think we should say that what people should concentrate on is the process of changing themselves, of developing; to begin with, in the situation that they find themselves. If they find that an actual change in their circumstances is needed to accommodate their higher aspirations, well, they shouldn't hesitate to make those changes, whether they're minor ones or whether they're major ones. They might involve giving up their job, taking another kind of job. Might involve moving to a smaller house. You know some people have done that. I mean they've decided to be less ambitious, as it were, to move from a bigger house into a smaller one, get a smaller mortgage, therefore need to work and earn less and in that way just reduce the pace of their lives. You see those sort of changes are also feasible some- times. Do you see what I mean?

Tris~ : It is hard sometimes when you strike people in beginners' classes who ask you, like, "Do- you have to come and live in the community and give all this sort of thing up?" And on one level you know that probably they will eventually do that but ::.

S : Well, it's a question of what is really skilful and what is unskilful. It's as if to say

what really pertains to what we may call the domestic structure and what doesn't. I mean is, for instance, having a TV set an essential part of the domestic structure? Well, no, you don't -- have to walk out of the house in order to walk away from the TV set. You could throw away the TV set! Do you see what I mean?

So, as I sa~d~ the question is, what is an essential part of the domestic set-up and what isn't? Can you improve the domestic set-up itself? One no doubt needs to consider that. And another point is, of course, well, existing responsibilities. If you'~~ay~ respo~sibility to children, you can't just throw that aside. That is impossible. And you can hardly drag your children around

S of 42 5 24 D7 Ti 6 too S(ctd) : with you and make them Go Forth~with you in a literal sense. That just isn't possible> or not in Britain, anyway. Not unless you get a caravan; but then again that's another - that's a house on wheels. It's still a house. So one also needs to take existing responsibilities into consideration. Or perhaps you have a rep~sibility for aged parent or some~thing like that. You can't just give it up. Well, I don't say you can never give it up under any circumstances, but certainly you can't lightly give it up. So I don't want to sort of suggest domestic life is always alright and you don't need to Go Forth. Well, yes, you may, but nonetheless one has to take a very realistic look at one's existing situation. And anyway, what does Going Forth mean in twentieth- century Britain? Well, usually it means moving into a community or going and l~ving on your own. So you have to really seriously consider what would be best for you in the circumstances. It may be that you're alright where you are.

~ou can make quite a few changes without altering your lifestyle. I think we have to realise,, though~ that the people who are at present in the Friends are a bit unrepresentative. I think this applie ~v~ n more to the women than to the men: Because most women in the Friends, they're not married, they don't have children, so this means they are not representative. So we want to avoid giving the impression, even with- out saying anything, that you can't really get in- volved in the FWBO if you're a female unless you have no husband and no children and are prepared to move into a co-op. Otherwise sometimes you nee~no't ;ta~~s~ anything but people just pick up that impression. Well, you must be careful not to give that impression, and to make it clear that others are welcome too. That others also can develop, others also can grow. At the same time, if you feel for yourself that Going Forth is necessary, living in a community is necessary, well, you need not hesitate to take that step. I think it's quite an important point that people should recognise that there are different ways of doing the same thing inasense,because sometimes people feel not very sure about what they are doing and want the reassurance of numbers, they feel sort of vaguely threatened or vaguely uneasy if somebody else is doing something in a some- what different way. They can't really feel, for instance, that Going Forth is right for them unless they can get everybody else to Go Forth and they all Go Forth together. Or they can't feel that staying at home and not Going Forth is right for them unless they can persuade every- body else that Going Forth is wrong. One really has to accept and really to see that different things suit different people, or are good for different people at different stages of their development. The same thing is not necessarily good for all. I think there has to be a great deal of self-confidence for one to be able to adhere faithfully to one's own chosen path while allowing others to do the same, even if their chosen path is rather different from yours.

S(ctd) : And you have to feel a spiritual fellowship with those people which transcends the difference of what we've come to call lifestyle: Do you see what I mean? There needs to be a feeling that the spiritual community embraces all, whether you've got a husband and children or whether you haven't, whether you've got a wife and children or whether you haven't, whether you've got four wives and children or none at all! Do you see what I mean? No, polyandry's a bit different. But do you see what I'm getting at? In the East, especially in the Theravada countries, this is not really the case. People feel that really 'it's the monks who belong to the spiritual community. The lay people are very much on the fringes of things and just support the monks. It's not so much the case in, say, Tibet or China, among Tibetan or Chinese Buddhists, because the Bodhisattva Ideal, which everybody accepts, helps to bridge the gap. But really one must feel that the spiritual community embraces all these different lifestyles to the extent that they are just genuine differences of structure and don't represent just getting bogged down in one way or another. Do you see the point here? There really needs to be a real living sense of spiritual community among people of different lifestyles, which means they really need to get together from time to time on certain occasions, to keep that common sense of 'spiritual community and the feeling that they belong to one and the same spiritual community. They have to keep that alive. But in comparison with the importance and significance of Going For Refuge, whether you're married or unmarried, with children or without, living at home or whether you're on the road, that's totally insignificant. It may loom very large on a day-to-day basis, but in a broader spiritual perspective these differences really are not very little. So one must have that firm conviction and realisation, even. Otherwise the spiritual community becomes too specialised, it's too closely identified with a particular lifestyle. It isn't easy to do this. I think maybe it's not easy for those who haven't Gone Forth in any way in a literal sense, it's very easy for them sometimes to feel that they don't really belong to the spiritual community. But they do belong to it to the extent that they really and truly do Go Forth in the sense of Going For Refuge and trying to develop spiritually.

: The newsletter that I read a few months ago on different lifestyles I think had a really very positive effect on people. It made them realise that there are different people, leading different kinds of lifestyles, in the Movement.

I also noticed from the response to that, that lots of people actually assumed that to be a Buddhist you have to live in some kind of monastic sort of situation. They were quite surprised to see normal lifestyles as part of the movement:

S : Well, there are all sorts of odd ideas about Buddhism current among the public and this no doubt is one of them.

~1~rfCn~ : You were saying about someone who hasn't Gone Forth literally not feeling perhaps part of the (movement?) and I know I felt, caught myself feeling at times, that it's only when, say, I'm in this situation, or on a retreat, or an Order/Mitra event or something like that, that's a kind of useful

position to be in, in that there's a kind of feeling that if you're just at home then somehow you're, like, standing still and I'm sure that S wrong because even if you...

S : Well, a situation in which you're standing still and can only stand still is a wrong situation. But the question is - well, in the particular situation that you find yourself, well, are you really obliged to stand still? Could you not really do more? Do you need to accept what seem to be those limitations? Are they in fact limitations? This is what one must constantly ask oneself. Just because I've got children, does it mean I can't sit and meditate? Does it really mean that? Or am I just using that as an excuse? It works the same in other ways: ' Some- one, say, very busy in the co-op might say, "Oh, I just haven't had time to meditate. I've just had to spend so much time going through the co-op accounts." I've heard this, but again the question is - well, is that really the truth?

: I've heard~people saying that, in the marri~~~ situation, although it may be harder for them, they actually feel, because they have to make the effort to find time to meditate, they feel they put a lot more into it and they sometimes feel that people in communities, when they have it all there on a plate, don't always make the ~0st of it.

S : I think that's rather a rosy view of communities, but weII-IQt  
~~tr4ss' But sometimes it 5 true in a way, if you have to make an effort to get something, maybe you value it more. But nothing really in the spiritual life comes to you on a plate, - even if you live in a community, even if you're trudging from village to village with your two robes and your begging bowl. Nothing - comes to you on a plate, really, ever, in the spiritual life, So I think that we can take it that what~ever the situation you're in, whether you're living in a community, whether you're living at home, there are certain appa£~~~limitations that you can only too easily u£Ase0fl~for not getting on with it. My~r sonal feeling about this, and I've thought about iC~A~ot, is that in the modern world, in the West, the distinction of lay and monastic becomes increasingly an unreal distinction. - ~or instance, I've seen enough of formal monasticism in the East. - I value monasticism but that too can become very rigid and very stylised: For instance, I've given the comparison in this sort of way. In some Buddhist countries you find, say, monks

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S(ctd) : who, yes, have technically Gone Forth, they've left their homes, they've left their families, they're living in monasteries. But you find quite a lot of monks nowadays, who, after Going Forth, they go tocoLieaeitfl~~y~~to University, they qualify, they get degrees and they take up teaching appointments in Colleges and they may live in College quarters and they draw a salary.

So it becomes hard really to think that they are monks in the real sense, but they're regarded as real monks because they wear the yellow robe and ' they shave their heads and all the rest of it, but really they're mor~~~~ke~layman than a monk in the real sense. Maybe they

don't meditate. A lot of them don't meditate. They're not really interested in the Dharma, one might even say, though they're ordained as monks, they've been put into it by their parents. So in what sense are they monks? In what sense have they Gone Forth? One must distinguish between the reality and the appearance. On the other hand you may have someone who has not Gone Forth technically. He may still be legally married but maybe he's not living at home, maybe he lives in a meditation centre and he runs the meditation centre. And he "isn't a monk, he doesn't wear yellow robe, hasn't shaved his head - but his whole time is devoted to teaching meditation and he is a meditator. Now according to Eastern Buddhist tradition, he's a layman, he's not a monk. Do you see what I mean? So again, what is the reality? What is the appearance? These things must be distinguished.

So it becomes increasingly difficult to make those sort of purely formal distinctions and I think goes against the spirit of Buddhism if the distinctions become purely formal in that way. So that the question is, well, what sort of life is the person actually leading? Apart from whether they're technically monks or technically lay people and so on: So I think we have to see things in this sort of way. If we do then we shall read sections like this in a different sort of spirit. You could even read it in another way and say people who are tied to their wives, children and homes are worse off than prisoners. Do you have to be tied in that sort of addictive sense? Even if you've got wives, children and homes or wife, children and home, you don't have to be a prisoner. I mean, not that there aren't certain objective limitations involved in the situation or in almost any situation, perhaps, but those limitations don't necessarily prevent you from developing spiritually. But again, of course, I'm assuming great honesty on the part of all concerned. People not using what I've said, whether they've Gone Forth or not Gone Forth, using what I've said as an excuse for rationalisation.

People seem to make themselves prisoners, seem to, especially you do notice it when doing the practice. One woman in particular came. She had a three-year-old boy, and she told me, "I've not often been separated from him," and so I said, "Well, if he cries too much I'll take care of it or I'll contact you in some way." And

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so after a little bit of reassurance she did leave the child and as soon as she was out of earshot he stopped any protest at all. He played very happily for the full time. So happily in fact that when she came he was on the floor playing with toys and ignored her. And the disappointment which she felt when he didn't get up immediately and run over, 'Mummy, Mummy,' but was much more sort of, 'Look, look, look,' he was saying. It was almost like: she didn't come back, obviously. I wondered if there was anything I could have said to her.

S . Well, their relationship was being disrupted.

Yet she, she's the one who was pushing the need on him, I felt.

S : Well, I could give you an even worse example of that. There used to be a husband and wife coming, or at least we knew, a husband and wife who



were involved in the FWBO, This is very early days. And then we started up retreats, but only the wife could come because the husband had to stay at home and look after the dog. So there was always this great thing that she could never bring her husband because, he wanted, he really did want to come, but he couldn't because he had to look after the dog. Occasionally she just stayed at home and looked after the dog while he came, and they were always saying, "Well, you know, we're really fond of the old dog but we will be a bit pleased, yo~~ know, or at least we won't mind when it die~ because~e'll both be able to come on retreat. So this went on for years. You never saw them both on retreat because one of them always had to look after the dog. It was usually the wife who came on retreat rather than the husband. I suppose he was tired after his week's work anyway. So at long last the dog died. So I said to her, "Well, sorry to hear about the dog, but I'll anyway you'll both be able to come on retreat now. So she said, "Yes, I suppose we will." So anyway, next year I saw her on the retreat by herself! "Where's your husband?" So she said, "Oh, he's looking after the dog." I said, "But the dog died." "Yes, I know, but we got a new puppy: So that is not. . having a dog or getting a new puppy is not an inherent part of the domestic structure. And there's quite a lot of things like that which don't essentially belong to that particular structure. It's not the structure that's limiting you. It's the accessories that you introduce, the unnecessary things, which limit you.

I bet you've been introduced to someone's dog as their child substitute!

S : Anyway, "A prisoner will be released sooner or later, but wives and children have no thought of betaking themselves off." Well, this is really no longer true. Some wives are thinking about it all the time! And as for the children - well, so are they! They can't leave home quick enough.

S of 42 5 24 D7 Ti ii : I did take myself off. S : Pardon?  
: I did take myself off.

S : "So why dread to lose them?" Yes, you might as well reconcile yourself to the loss of them in advance because they're not going to wait for you to walk out! "kOtherwise)you are tamely submitting to the jaws of a tiger." I suppose it should be tigress really! "Deliberately allowing yourself to drown in the quick- sand into which you have fallen, thus meriting the name of simple fellows1.11

S~loc~n& : Well, they may both be making efforts to sort of redeem a situation which... I mean, it may not just be one tiger.

S : Yes. : In fact, two.

S : Well, if they both want to Go Forth I suppose that's alright provided they don't Go Forth together! That might be a little ( )! "If you can

enter by this Dharma gate you will rise from the dust and become Arhans." So what is meant by Dharma gate~ do you think? Where does this term occur? There's a sutra in which it occurs:

In the 'Vimalakirti.'

S : In the 'Vimalakirti.' Yes. A Dharma gate means a sort of opening through which you can pass and gain access to the spiritual path. Whether in terms of understanding or in terms of concrete practice. So what is the Dharma gate here, do you think? What is the Dharma gate?

: Going Forth.

S : Yes. The fact that you can if you want to Go Forth, in this literal, ~0~ - sense. But, I mean, one could say that there's a nether - subtler Dharma gate. That there's no situation really from which you cannot Go Forth, at least mentally, at least spiritually, in the sense that you make of it a spiritual opportunity.

Again I want to stress that there are endless possibilities of rationalisation here, but the fact that people may use what you've said as a rationalisation doesn't mean that you shouldn't say it if it is the truth. So maybe one should say, well, when you get involved in Buddhism, when you get involved with the Friends, you're in a particular situation of some kind or other. The emphasis should be on growing or developing: If you find the cage becoming too small for your wings, well, by all means either provide yourself with a bigger cage or fly out of the door of the cage altogether. But before you've even sort of started trying your wings there's not much point in discussing the size of the cage. This is really the point, isn't it?

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S(ctd) : And here you: are~ not even hopping from perch to perch, and you're sitting disconsolately on one of the perches and looking around and wondering whether to enlarge the cage. You're not even making use of the opportunities that you have already.

: There is a danger of cutting off from the ( ) isn't there?

S : Yes, because the danger of just seeing, for instance, the possibilities of a larger situation purely mentally when you may not be emotionally in a position to take advantage of this. I mean, sometimes we see people doing that in all sorts of ways. Anyway, I think the general principle is clear. So~r j'is~a~c~ supposing someone comes along, say, to your centre. Maybe their lifestyle is different from yours, so life-style shouldn't be the first thing you discuss. You should discuss first the actual practice of the Path. Practice of meditation and so on. And if they do practice sincerely, then any sort of limitations that there may be inherent in their lifestyle will become obvious to them, themselves. There's no point in you pointing out the need for change before that need has been real~y~ felt. And they may not feel it in the way that you feel it they would, because maybe their experience of

things is different from yours. Anyway, maybe enough about that. On to twenty-five.

: 11 The Buddha said: "Of all longings and desires, there is none stronger than sex. Sex as a desire has no equal. Rely on the (universal) Oneness. No one under heaven is able to become a follower of the Way if he accepts dualism."

S : Read that little note opposite.

"The Buddhist argues that distinctions between this and that are really void and that, fundamentally, every-thing is one. Sex is an extreme example of the negation of this theory, since it depends entirely upon the attraction between opposites. This doctrine has been greatly developed by the Mahayana School. It is possible that this sentence originally meant that a man cannot hope to devote himself entirely to the Way if hampered by a wife."

S : It seems rather an odd conclusion,~ The sentence doesn't seem to mean that at all.  
' The sentence seems to be on quite a different level, in a way, a more philosophical level. Anyway, "The Buddha said:" Of all longings and desires there is none stronger than sex." Do you think this is correct? Or do you think it's an over-generalisation?

I don't think it's true, actually. I think the desire for food...

S : For what?

St~han~: For food and drink is actually stronger because that's a stronger biological urge.

~S2

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S : Yes. Right. Yes. But do you think the Buddha, if it is the Buddha, is referring to desi~es&pt he~~han direct biological needs like food~/an0~~r~~lc:£B ecause possibly you can live without sex but you can't live without food and drink, so in that sense your desire for food and drink is certainly stronger than your desire for sex. But is it really the same kind of desire? I mean, are they comparable, one might say?

: Probably the desire for sex is stronger in the extent to which it can distort your mind.

S . Mm.

( ) - craving. If you get people starving that would be different than if you were just craving.

S . Yes, yes.

I sometimes wonder whether maternal love isn't very, very strong. You were talking about the helplessness of the child evoking very strong feelings here.

S : Well, some people would think that. Some people would even say that for them the maternal feeling is strong~~We desire for, power is strong. Also one frs'A 0+ ~ofa) might say th~~~u can't over-generalise: Perhaps it is different at different periods in one's life. I mean, when you are young, especially when you are in your,,,,,t~e~g~ and early twenties and so on, well, sexual desire, is very, very strong. But towards the end of your life it usually~ sort of diminishes, but other desires, especially~~ %s~Q~~~ire for money, the desire for power, may go on increasing. So one also has to take into account the time of life. But nonetheless, I don't think anybody would disagree that~ in the lives of most people, sex as a desire is very, very strong: And the Buddha goes on to say: "Rely on the (universal) Oneness. No one under heaven is able to become a follower of the Way if he accepts dualism." I think this is the important point: I think sexual desire is used as a paradigm of the dualistic situation. Do you see? It's a prominent example - one that practically everybody encounters - o~ ~h~~ ~A~j3t~c fit~ot&'on.

Su'ocAh~

Something to do with the unsatisfactoriness.

S : So what is this dualistic situation? And I think Blofeld in his.... no, he misses the point completely. It's not 50 much just an attraction between opposites. In a sense it's more than that. What is the basic dualism of human existence?

: Subject-' object.

S : Subject- object. So what is the basic non-dualism you may say, of Buddhism?

Not ( )

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S : Yes. It's recognising that the distinction between subject and object does not pertain to Reality, that Reality transcends this distinction between subject and object. And I speak of sexual desire as a sort of paradigm of this subject/object duality because what characterises the subject/object duality is that here is you and there is the object and you are in pursuit of the object. ~~~~~ Q t~vt~t0rij as it wett, be~an ~W A\$~ t~it obJQ~; ~ot£ w~A ~ arrop;act ~~~n+~this is what is meant by craving~aU~, the sense of ~r,S.n:a. that there is in the desire on your part, that tendency on your part, to appropriate the object. But this you can never do. You can never, as it were, break down dualism within the framework of dualism. You can only reach the object, so to speak, by transcending the subject/object duality itself. So that the sexual relationship, the sexual desire, is a paradigm of this situation: Because in the case of sexual desire you're going out to your sexual opposite. You're trying to appropriate the sexual opposite. But actually you can never do 'this. There may be a temporary relief or a momentary satisfaction, -' but you can never merge with that object as you would like to merge. (Merging), in inverted commas, is only possible if you transcend that duality altogether. So sex as a desire is so powerful just because it mirrors or it reflects or

it embodies this sort of fruitless pursuit of the object by the subject, Seeking a merger that can never come about: because however close the union may seem, subject remains subject, object remains object. Sooner or later you fall apart again. You're back in duality. So I think this is really what the saying is getting at: The 'oneness' here is not a sort of metaphysical oneness in a sort of eternalist kind of way. It's that state, that spiritual experience, in which duality is transcended: So, in the case of sex, people try, as it were, to transcend duality by simply merging the opposites, by coming in close, physical contact with the opposite, but it doesn't work. You're expecting from the situation something it can't give you. You can't achieve oneness in that way. Maybe a temporary physical, even emotional closeness, but not absolute oneness, not non-duality. Sometimes people almost think they can, almost hope they can. You might even get a glimpse of that non-duality in that state, but it's no more than a glimpse and you can't retain it, you can't keep hold of it. So this is really what I think it's all about.

: Would it follow then, Bhante, that if someone had transcended the subject/object duality they would naturally no longer wish to engage in sexual activity?

S : Well, some Buddhist traditions would say yes, some would say no. I would say that if you had transcended duality, if you did engage in such activity it would not be for that purpose and it would therefore not

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S(ctd) : have the compulsive, desperate character about it that sexual activity very often does have. Well, if you'd achieved non-duality you'd have nothing to look for anyway. Do you see what I mean? So you certainly wouldn't have that sort of motivation behind the sexual activity that is usually behind it, and that being the case, well, even if you did engage in sexual activity, it would be of a radically different kind from what people usually experience. And again I say if. ~~~~~ : Is it possible for us to think of how to cease to accept dualism or is that better ( )?

S : Well, one ceases to accept dualism, or one sees or experiences a non-dualistic reality, only when there is Insight ( ) craving which exists as long as there isn't Insight, as long as there is ( ): Better craving is that sort of tension between the subject and the object, the sort of movement of the subject towards the object. Trying to sort of find in the object or gain from the object what certainly, well, permanently: the object cannot give.

: Maybe ( a short insight into what you can get when in a situation like that, where you can't pursue it elsewhere, where you can get it more permanently. Say, in sex, if you manage to obtain a flash of non-duality you might then, well, I can't keep this up, I'll have to go somewhere else to find it:

S : Well, yes, if I want really to experience this to any extent I just have to take up meditation.

Christi~t : Yes, it might encourage you to.

S : Yes, it might. I wouldn't place too much reliance on that sort of incentive! But anyway one can't rule out any possibility.

~~,st~r'e : ( ) in a mundane way. I mean it might give you a chance to recognise it later on iF you came across it in meditation.

S : No, I think if you really did come across it in meditation, well, you'd come across it. It would carry its own conviction if you did have a glimpse of non-duality. I mean even the expression 'a glimpse of non-duality' is a contradiction in terms. Because non-duality is not an object which you glimpse. I mean it's ' different sort of experience. It doesn't just hit you from in front. It hits you from behind at the same time. Because it is as much subject as object: So as long as you're experiencing Reality 'out there' you're not experiencing Reality because you're still within the dualistic framework. You've refined it somewhat, which is helpful, but you haven't

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S(ctd) : done r~ly anything more than that. So long as you've simply refined the duality, it's insight perhaps with a small 'i' but it's only when the duality is really shattered~ or a crack appears in it, that it, s insight with a big 'I': But the crack extends behind as well as in front.

: Do you think the craving that is associated with sex~IS worse or seen more often in the West than in the East?

S : Possibly. I mean this is not an area within which one can generalise with any degree of confidence: I think- I mean we did touch on this ~ ' the other day- that in an industrialised society where~ou' re cut off from Nature, where the senses are fed le5~,~~~a~r~~~ nourished less by Nature, by contact with Nature, I think that at least in some cs~, in the case of some people, there'll be a tendency0~~o~ind some sort of compensation in sexual activity. Do you see what I mean? I think that means that the sexual act becomes a bit overloaded with importance or significance. It is, I think it is noticeable, t at ~~o~l e who are engaged in physical activities, pe ~le%Sw%%Cse physical activity brings the into contact with the elements, with the earth~~fldwb1a1~r,aS~~ay,~t~ey do a lot of swimming, they place less emphasis on sex\* because they have a wider sort of span of sense contacts. I mean, for instance, for some people -- pleasurable sense contact is perhaps vitally limited to sex. So that becomes more and more important to them. Not just as sex but as sense contact. Whilst others may have lots of contact with sunshine, with air - well, we all breathe air but sometimes we don't recognise it as air...

Especially in London!

S . ... and then with water, the earth itself.

° Particularly probably in the cities, when you're bombarded in terms of music, photogr,aphs, advertisements, sexual stimuli all the time. There s a...

S : Yes, that's true. There is an artificial stimulation which you find in the modern West which you do ~~~~~fin~ in, say, communist countries. You don't find many countries of the East or the Islamic world:~in

Car)~ . It's extremely unhelpful.

eeoei~ : r thin~ sometimes,~get a bit confused between just wanting to be touched and sexual desire, as well.

S : Ah yes. Because touch represents sense, it doesn't necessarily represent sex, but a lot of people get their, sort of, touch or their nourishment through touch, onlyj'~t~~XiFa~siti&(xti~i~so they come to think of the two as necessarily connected. And sometimes it happens that people are just as much in search of touch as they are in search of sex.

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S(ctd) : In our society sometimes it's very difficult to get touch without sex. I mean touch is taboo, ~specially between people of the same sex, just because of that sort of a~o~iation. I think people who have done a bit of massage have realised this, but if you're not acquainted with these sort of things, you might think massage must have some sort of sexual significance or~tope might be':~e~~,iit for that reason.

But that is probably very unlikely. It's the touch nourishment that they're really in search of and in fact satisfi~~WQt~~° ~~~~~~. ~4~y~I r~uch more rieose.d, much more relaxed. ~trequ'i~res its own separate satisfaction. I'm told, at least I've read somewhere, that small babies, if they're not touched, if they're not handled or fondled, they don't thrive, they may not even live. It's as though touch is a kind of nutr~nt. I think this sort of need persists even in the adult but may be less urgent than in the infant.

I mean, in India, I mean among people there is actinlly more touch, I think, more physical contact, but this is because they' re~ stricter about se~~ and there are many situations i~which physical contact can occur without there being any suggestion of sex. Within the domestic environment massage is' very common. In many households you see the younger women massaging the legs of the older women. It's very common.

And babies they massage.

S : Yes and babies are more - t?hey hardly need massagin g~ an~~ ~re so fondled and passed f om hand to hand ~ ept astride people's hips an da! hat sort of thing. Men as well as women are constantly in contact with babies and small children. In England certainly it used to be thought, maybe it still is to some extent, that it's not the proper business of a man to carry around children or fondle them. Maybe it 5 not very manly. You don't have any such feelings in India. In this country we find sometimes women don't like to allow men to handle the babies. They're convinced that a man will drop a baby as soon as it's han4eot~h~~ni~Well, if he hasn't had any practice at it of course he might drop it! But in

India there's nothing like that. Every- body handles the babies and looks after them. It's quite common. ;t s~~~, So there is this point that there is this need 'for bodily contact quite apart from sex, that is a distinction. I think more and more people are beginning to realise that.

: Especially when someone is ill, when people are ill. It's really important, just touching their hands or putting your... just touching them. And I think that says a lot more than actually wishing them well or even expressing your sentiments. I find that when I'm nursing. I tend to go even~ ~~ 'total strangers\*lh~t0~ek£~ I just go and touch their hand~ whether it's a man or or ~

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(ctd) a woman I do it\* and immediately it has a strong effect.

S : I suppose it depends on how ill you feel. I mean, when I was~ji India, I mean, one or two days - I wasn't ver~y£~~ll and I was really surprised at the number of people who kept coming and putting their hand here, just to feel whether or not I'd got a temperature and I'm afraid I didn't enjoy it very much! I thought they were rather a nuisance. I wished they wouldn't bother me. I would rather have been left quiet, whether I wasn't really ill. -- Lokamitra kept doing it, coming and putting his hot, heavy hand ( )! I was wishing he wouldn't bother. I don't mind people showing their affection by bringing a cup of tea! But, maybe they meant well, but they weren't just sort of delicate enough in the way they sort of... You don't want to have a hand sort of clamped on (your?) forehead when you're not feeling particularly well. ( ) it's really doing you any good. I hope I'm not being ungrateful! But it's a question of doing something sensitively. Alright, twenty-six. I'm afraid we're still on this same topic so we might as well go into it thoroughly.

: "The Buddha said:" Those who(permit themselves) longings and desires are like a man who walks in the teeth of the wind carrying a torch. Inevitably, his hands will be burnt. The gods bestowed the jade girl upon me, hoping to shake my determination. I said: 'O skin bag, full of every kind of filth! For what have you c0~~e here? Go! I do not need you.' Then the gods pa-1 .-d me profound reverence and, as they asked me to expound the Way, I enlightened them and they became Srota-apanas as a result."

S Well, the first point to make here is with regard to terminology; 'Longings and desires' are mentioned. But 'desires' at least really needs a qualification, 'neurotic desires'. ~Be~c~use~'de,,si~~'j~i~~really in English a very neutrtarwor~5:e~t~ou,\*\*can 5pe~~C~~f a desire for Nirvana, a desire for the spiritual life, a desire to evolve. You can use 'desire' in that way quite legitimately. So what the Buddha is really saying is, those who permit themselves neurotic longings, neurotic desires, that is to say, cravings, are like a man who walks in the teeth of the wind carrying a torch. What's the point of the comparison? What will happen to you if you walk in the teeth of the wind carrying a torch?

: The torch will burn you.

: It will blow back o"lto you.



S : Yes. So if you allow yourself to be subjected to neurotic desires, to cravings, well, it will result in suffering for you, sooner or later. Well, that's

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S(ctd) : pretty obvious. I think we need to emphasise that it's neurotic desires, otherwise people may get the impression that in Buddhism, in the spiritual life, all desire is to be eliminated. Some translations definitely give that impression. But if there's no desire, well, there's no spiritual life either. Desire is a positive as well as a negative thing. So we really have to watch our terminology. So: "The gods bestowed the jade girl upon me, hoping to shake my determination." What is this 'jade girl'?

en Il~t~hM~n~~

: It was supposed to be more precious than gold, wasn't it?

S : Well, this is really a Chinese idiom. Jade means, well, jade is, of course, a very rare, a very beautiful semi- precious stone. So in Chinese, if some~hing is described as jade it suggests it is very beautiful, very precious. So a jade girl would mean, not literally a girl made of jade, but a very beautiful girl, an ideally beautiful girl. So, the gods bestowed an ideally beautiful girl upon me. In Pali she is sometimes called the (janapada kalyani?). (Janapada kalyani?) means 'the beautiful one of the province' . In other words, the sort of beauty queen of the whole area. So this seems to be the Chinese equivalent of that. "The gods bestowed the jade girl upon me, hoping to shake my determination. I said: 'O skin bag, full of every kind of filth! For what have you come here? Go! I do not need you.'" I do not remember that in the biography of the Buddha there is any actual such incident, unless there is some distant reference to Mara's daughters in dancing before the Buddha on the eve of his Enlightenment. But, I mean, that apart, the general underlying philosophy is clear. No doubt we must not forget that the Buddha is speaking with regard to monks. This is a reference to what is sometimes called the ~S~~~ bAav~n~' that is to say the recollection of the unpleasant aspects of the physical body, especially the unpleasant aspects of a dead physical body, in order to inhibit your own physical, I suppose sexual, desire. This is a well-known technique. For instance, there is the contemplation of the ten stages of the decomposition of a corpse and you've probably read about that. Yes? You first of all contemplate the dead body, then the dead body when it begins to decay1 etc. etc. There are ten stages of decay and you end up with]uSt~ handful of bones. So this is a reminder of death, of impermanence, that your own body is impermanent, your own body is subject to decay and death, so you should not be attached to your own body any more than to that decaying body. And also this sort of practice is used to inhibit sexual desire and is recommended for those (~p~kL'~M~ t'fl

tA~cor"t~C oF monks) who are of especially greedy

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S(ctd) : temperament or in whom sexual desire is especially strong. So this is the technique and no doubt this is useful on certain occasions. But the question arises, I mean, after all since we are living and practising 'in the West, whether this is in fact, or would be, in

fact, a useful technique. Do you think it would work in this way 4r Pt~eIe'.

: I can never relate to it very much because I don't tend to think of the body as containl~~ filth. ( - - - )then. (" ' - y don't understand ~e ( ) ~ort o~ T~'ri~

S : Well, this point was made by somebody who was staying with me in Kalimpong. He was a doctor and he read Buddha~sa's description of the digestive process. Buddha~osa gives th description to put you off eating, yes? So you learn all the sorts of horrible things that happen to food after you've swallowed it. So this doctor said : " I don't agree with Buddhagosa, he's absolutely wrong, the digestive process is beautiful."

: 11f people take the (9pposite sex")as a kind of object and not thinking, not relating in more than a materialistic ' - way, they would think and then it wouldn't be a real...

S . Yes, you're trying to replace the concept of pleasant object by the concept of unpleasant object. But the emphasis is on object.

~t~~~~~: This is a form of cultivating the opposite, isn't it? S : Yes.

Which~I personally find that quite a limited technique: It might give you a better perspective on what you re looking at, but it doesn't actually get you out of the situation.

S : Yes. I think in the case of the Theravada the tendency has been to regard the unpleasant aspect as the real aspect and the pleasant aspect as the unreal aspect. Do you see what I mean? To say that the body is really just all the disgusting things that it contains. That's all that's really there. That's what it really is. Well, this is, strictly speaking, not true. It may be that it's useful to direct your attention to some other side of the picture for a particular purpose, but but that does not mean that that side of the picture is more real than the one at which you usually look. But that is ttr~t~'~nty how it is so~~t~stes presented by some modern Theravada writers. ~or instance, I think I've expressed it in 'The Three Jewels', their view seems to be that ugliness is real, beauty is unreal~ whereas the one is no more real and unreal than the other.

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S(ctd) : So it's not a question of looking at another human body and saying, well, it isn't really beautiful as it seems to be. It's really ugly because it's made up of pus and blood and marrow and all tile r~t q~ ~t This is not really philosophically correct however useful it may be as a methodology.

~~~~io~an~: If this practice was done towards a living person it could perhaps do that person harm.

S . Well, if they knew about it~perhaps.

~~~~~g Well, they would know.

S : What do you mean by harm?

S~io~~hA: Well, trying to have an aversion towards someone alive. I mean, it's alright to think of at - dead bodies, a~4 the disintegration b0'c~ i~ ~C S ~i,\*~

rpse,~ ~~~someone had a craving toward someone and they tried to do this practice to cure themselves of this craving. This could do that person harm.

S : It's not that they're saying that the other person is bad or wicked or::

: No, but it might have that effect. tA~ s~de S : But there is this other side which is unpleasant1~to which they don't usually give attention. Usually they give attention only to the pleasant side, So they're giving attention to ttle unpleasant side which is there, at least to restore the balance. But of course it isn't that one should go up to that person and say: 'You're nothing but a bag of filth.' Well, clearly this wouldn't be even if it was true~~o~ ~L16~t SAy ;t.

~~'r4s tti~ 'eLrso~ S~tocA~~ : Even if you thought it, it would have a negative effect~.

S : But it is a part of the truth. : I don't... I disagree.

: It's only very fragmentary, isn't it? -a~ lea~2 ~~~nd ~ So : I think I tend to see... it's more helpful~to regard bodies as made up of~ive elements, because filth, after all, is just a value judgement about a part of yourself.

S : Right. : And it, s not, it, ...  
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S : But then this sort of technique is not setting out, or should~n0t set out, to form, as it were, a philosophical view or a philosophical conviction, but it is using your natural disgust for something as a means of counteracting your natural attraction to some- thing, so that the one casceis ottt the other. I mean, intrinsic-ally nothing that the human body contains is filthy, It's not a scientific term, it's only an emotional reaction. But it's as though you're using one emotional reaction to counteract another emotional reaction. Do you see what I mean? This is what is happening. I think the difficulty comes in where you convert that into a sort of philosophical judgement about the nature of the object as such.

: Well, if you're in a state of craving I should think it's likely that you haven't got any clear thinking, so it might go wrong, this kind of practice.

S . Well, the traditional Buddhist answer to that would be that strong

cravings require strong medicine! Even the contemplation of corpses in the cemetery  
- it does have an effect.

: Isn't actually having one in front of you different to sitting thinking what it would be like? I mean, if you don't really think that your insides are filthy, then could it really, would it really be useful?

S : Well, you might even say that if you're over-attached to your own physical body or if you're narcissistic, well, it might be useful to direct your attention to those aspects of your physical function which you yourself do in any case, if you think about them at all, ~eg~rd~t~(~rt of not very pleasant, or ~mething of that sort, to counteract your natural narcissism. It might be useful. So if, for instance, you're over-attached to somebody or you're always seeing them in very pleasant terms, maybe because you're projecting, it might be useful to remind yourself~ well, there are other things about that person that if you directed your attention towards, -- you wouldn't be particularly attracted to:' - I mean this is what the technique is saying.

It seems much more relevant on a sort of psychological or interpersonal level, in that you can't idolise certain characteristics in a person. You just manage to see them as a more complete person.

S . Yes.

Because on a gross physical level it doesn't actually make much sense to me except as a reminder of those...

S : Well, if you want to go to the other extreme, if you want to play devil's advocate, you may say, well, there are some people who would not be affected in this way. I mean, there are some people- there are perversions such as necrophilia and so on. What are you going to

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S(ctd) : do about those people? It may not always quite work. It may work for some people but it may not work in all cases~~~~~jn oi~cases of neurotic desire. But I'm going into this somewhat because it has historically featured as quite an important technique or quite an important attitude and has been pretty widely used in all Buddhist countries. In Tibet it's still used. People do go to burning grounds or places where corpses are dismembered and so on. And monks still have recourse to this technique. But, having said that, the question I asked was, well, here in the West, admitting that craving and especially sexual craving of a neurotic kind needs to be, well, at least modified or brought under control, is this the best way to do it? If not, well, what is the best way to do it?

: Well, the availability of corpses isn't so great, so...

S : But if one really wants to see a corpse one can. One can get a job as a porter in a

hospital. One of our Friends did and laid out any number of corpses. You can arrange through a friend to visit a mortuary. It's not very difficult if you really want to see dead bodies. Some people have never seen a dead body. Even some middle-aged people have never seen a dead body. Maybe they've missed something. Do you see what I mean? But I mean, it is a fact that if one does any sort of practice of this sort you're brought bang up against your own limitations and any neurotic desires which you may have receive at severe jolt, and this can for some people be - - very salutary and really open their eyes. But again it is a very harsh treatment. It is very bitter medicine. So the question arises, well, is there another way of achieving the same result?

I think it's quite, in a way, straightforward, though it is very difficult and again one can fool oneself quite a lot. - One needs to see people more as individuals. Do you see what I mean? But again one must be fairly honest and not use that just as a sort of ploy. Do you see what I mean? Disguising to yourself what your actual attitude really is. to that : How did you get individuals from a - - b - - S - - to O - - te?

S : Well, maybe I've jumped a bit ahead. You're trying to do as it were--I mean the purpose of this sort of technique - - seeing someone, say, as a skin bag full of every kind of filth, is to inhibit neurotic desire, especially sexual desire. So if one doesn't want to adopt that technique, if one wants to concentrate on some - - ect - - of a person other than the one that you usually concentrate on, in such a way that neurotic desire is inhibited, well, perhaps it would be more suitable in the West to concentrate on the fact that that person is neither a bundle of charms, physically speaking, nor a bag of filth, but - - a human being, an individual who is trying, well, if not to develop spiritually, at least to live. Do you see what I mean?

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S(ctd) : But this isn't easy\* because I think it's very difficult for a man to ignore the fact that a woman is a woman. It's very difficult for a woman to ignore the fact that a man is a man. In fact one might say that it isn't a question of ignoring it but of not allowing it to be at the centre of consciousness, whereas it usually is. It's important to try to allow that fact to become a bit peripheral, a bit secondary, and concentrate on relating to the other person, not via the sexual, biological polarity but via - - as it were Co - - os, and if possible spiritual, human interests. But having said that, I mean, clearly it's not easy. It's very easy to fool oneself and - - think, well, I'm just attracted by his or her human characteristics, it's a great spiritual friendship, but it's not really - - & r - - that at all sometimes. You see, you can fool yourself - - J so easily. But nonetheless that shouldn't prevent us making the point that I think the real solution to this particular problem is that you try to see others much more as individuals and that means you try to behave as an individual - - more and relate as an individual - - more. And I think if you don't want to be treated as a sex object, you mustn't behave as a sex object. I mean that's also important to remember. And just as it takes two to set up a sexual relationship, it takes two to set up a non-sexual relationship.

: Do you think that - - ' if you see some one as an individual, if you really have seen them, you've transcended that sexual polarity?

S . Well no, I won't say you've transcended it, because it's still there, t~e-kf~atter~oF fact that the person belongs to the opposite sex, say, you can't ignore that completely:, but it becomes much less important. Do you see what I mean? It isn't at the centre of attention as it was perhaps before. It isn't the main thing in the way that you see other people.

: Does it take two to set up sexual relationships? I mean if someone always treats you in that way, even if you don't react back, I mean, he could still go on doing it. He may even maybe get annoyed with voti b~ecg~a ~o~ ~\$ot r~~~t"~~ beJc, bt&t they're still working like that.

S : Mm. Ne, ~A~ ~ SOLIOf 'sexual relationship' I meant something reciprocal but, yes, certainly someone can see you in those narrower terms when you don't see them in those narrower terms. That is certainly possible. So for one reason or another in modern Western society there is a very great deal of that and it isn't healthy. Well, even if it's healthy, it isn't really human because it means you're seeing some- one of the opposite sex almost exclusively in terms of sexuality, which means you're not seeing them pri~rily as an individual.

S of 42 S 26 D7 Ti 25 in a wa~ S(ctd) : But you might even argue that~ that is natural if the person of the opposite sex is behaving in such a way that his or her sexuality is emphasised. You've got to 'behave also as an individual as well as see others as individuals.Oc~u,"~e you can't eliminate sexuality comp~e~t~~~~~orLIts~uld you seek to eliminate it completely but that's only a part of the picture, it's not the whole of the picture.

: It seems that it's quite often unconscious and seen by - someone watching as if it were done on purpose. I think quite often it s seen a way to be....

S . Well, a lot of human behavsour is unconscious. - This is one of the things that&re important in spiritual development: One must be more aware of what one is actually doing. You may not know what you're doing. g~ ~I( S~foca~~: It may not beLthe sort of behaviour that is interpreted as that.

S . Well, there are those sort of possibilities of mis- understanding, obviously, I mean in very extreme cases even, but this is just an example of the sort of misunderstandings that can occur.

St~p~~tC: But at the same time, unconsciously, it will all come out of a certain state of mind. So if you work on your state of mind\*~your orientation, then that'll be taken care of.

0,' t~~~ one S : But I thinkLone has to reco,nLse that people are affected by your behaviour, even though you~~ a~~~o admit th~.so~~~l~cs~ may - misunderstand the way you behave. Again, it depends on the local culture. In India, if an un- attached woman goes up to a man and starts speaking to him, he'll understand that in only one way. Because of the culture in this country, a man probably wouldn't understand it in that sort of way. So the cultural context has to be taken into consideration. So does temptation! But do you see what I mean? Sometimes there can be cross-cultural misunderstandings. Yes? I mean that's why it's not easy sometimes for Western women to go around India. Hitch lifts and that sort of thing. Even in Southern Europe sometimes there are misunderstandings. I mean men sometimes think: rf a woman is on her own,- --- -- - this means she hasn't got a husban~; ~f she hasn't got a husband, then she must be looking for one. - alost t Caria : A

friend~was wandering through India~for quite a long time and was - in a very remote region, wandering alone through mountains. Someone, she didn't know where they came from, but a man camd out and raped her and then sat down next to her, I mean after she'd been traumatised, and offered her a cigarette.

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(ctd) : Started smoking and offered her a cigarette. As if this was to be expected if you did this.

S : Yes. : She was pretty shocked.

S : So therefore, if you as a Western woman, with your Western cultural assumptions, are wandering in India not realising that they've got different cultural assumptions, well, to a great extent, I won't say this this is your fault, then ' it is incumbent upon you as a trav#10s~~(~inf0rm yourself about

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S . - - - - from a/spiritual point of view in our dealings with people, in our behaviour. An~ the way in which we treat people should always in fact emphasize that we are relating to them primarily as individuals, rather than in terms of any subsidiary interest. Do you see what I mean? I mean you can relate to someone not as an individual



when you are concerned, for instance, with the money you might get from them or the help that they might render you. Do you see what I mean? You are not then concerned with them primarily as an individual for their own sake, as it were, and in the same way you're not concerned with them primarily as an individual if you really are thinking - 'all or most of the time in terms of the sexual gratification you may be able to get from them.

~teph~hie : If you feel that somebody is relating to you in a narrow way, just one aspect~' do you feel it's worth trying to do anything about that, or should you write them off or what? I often really

S . Well, the thing is, how pronounced it is. I mean if it's a sexual question if someone is constantly pestering you with unwanted attentions,- it may be that the only thing you can do, if he will not take ~' hint, is to break off the connection.

: Yes, it's more th~~ - not necessarily in a sexual context but in quite a number of contexts. Sometimes you get to know somebody on one level and then you start feeling you don't want it to be so narrow. You start resenting the fact that they're only interested in one aspect.

S : I was reading something on this very topic only last night. Something written in that new magazine on imagination and the arts; called 'Te~uos '. Some of you may have seen it. An article by Houston Smith. And he was saying that one of the features of modern life is that people know us only in segments,, in - particular aspectL He said that in the first place you don't know and go on being' known by the same people throughout your life. When you are at high school and college you are known to one lot of people. When you marry and maybe move, get a new job, you are known to another lot of people. Then after a few years - you move somewhere else,you get a whole new lot of friends. You are known to another lot of people. But there is no one who has - known you over the whole stretch of your life. In the same way there are different groups of people who know you in different relationships. The people at work know you in your economic capacity,people at your club maybe in your sporting capacity. People at home know you in another capacity. Do you see what I mean? But you are not in contact with anybody who knows you

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S(ctd) : in all your different aspects. So he sort of combines these two, that there is no one who has known you all through your life and there is no one who has known you in all your aspects. So you are not in contact with anybody who knows you as a whole. Therefore it is very difficult for you to experience yourself as a whole. Because you are constantly relating to other people in a segment or as a particular aspect of yourself. So you yourself are fragmented. Do you see what I mean? This is the sort of thing which you are meaning, isn't

it? So I think within any given situation people sometimes resent your trying to broaden the area of contact. They think it's even a bit indecent. If you are, 5~~ working with someone they may be quite friendly but if you try to open up about things you really believe in or ~~~"~ybe your domestic difficulties, this is rather frowned on. Do you see what I mean?

Do you think it's just a strange sort of phenomenon then and there is not much we can do about it?

S : Well, I went on to think, you see, and then I thought, well, we are doing something about it, it doesn't happen in the Friends. Because, ~I~~an, 1e~~~~ou move from place to place you are inc~r?~ac 1Lwi 'the same body of people all the time. Even if you move around the world you can be in contact with what is essentially the same body of people. And they know you in different aspects. You' live with them, you work with the 'you meditate with them, play with them, study~~~~ ~~~~~ on retreat with them. They know you at your best and they know you perhaps at your worst, you see? So it did occur to me, reading this article, that within the Friends we have created a situation where you can be in contact with the same people, at least intermittently, over the whole of the rest of your life. And in contact with them in many different ways. The so-called spiritual, the so-called non-spiritual, the cultural, the economic, the domestic, but you are in contact with people in all these sort of ways. In contact with the same people in all these - ways. So to that extent we have solved that problem; atleaS~ we have created a little area, a little oasis, where you can relate to the same people over a decent length of time and where you can relate to them through all the different aspects of yourselves. You have not got different groups of people for different aspects, you have got one and the same group of peCo\$%~~1A1(~Therefore you can experience your whole"e~s' ~O're, I" mean you're an economic woman, you're a woman of culture, you're a meditating woman, you're a woman who goes on retreat, you're all of these things and you can experience yourself as all of these things. You're even a woman who loses her temper; well, it's known to everybody, there is not one special group of people for whom you keep your temper,

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S(ctd) : which is sometimes the case. I remember one of our ~riends telling me that he absolutely hated his father when he was a boy and as a teena~er. His f~ther was such a miserable old so and so ~ ~0M~~ ~nA - his sons hated him, his daughters disliked him,-. cts~ even his wife didn't love him any more~ he was so unpleasant ~t.

Anyway, he died. I remember him telling me that when his father used to have his afternoon nap on a Sunday his two sons would stand behind his armchair with a hammer and sort of play at hitting him on the head: Just enjoying~t~~~~e er~ence beca~se~~ey\_hated him so much. But then he ~i £~~an~0~~~ or o~o~ e they went to the funeral. And all his mates from work came to the funeral and they were saying, tOh, they were so sorry to lose him, he was the life and soul of the party. He was such fun at work, always telling funny stories. They just couldn't r~c~gnise~~:~~~~1~?~:s though he kept all the unpleasant side of himself for his wife and chL1dren~ which seems extraordinary! At work, at the factory, he was a different person, you see. So this is what tends to happen in extre~e cases. We split ourselves up into those different parts, different roles, functions and we keep this role or this function, this aspect for this group and another for that group. We never behave as a whole person. No

one ever knows us as a whole person.

I feel I have got some kind of habit of doing that because, even within the Friends, I often feel people are relating to me in a particular way, they come up to me for a particular reason, rather than just up to me.

S : Well, some people have complained of that, for instance people with particular skills. Well~£~ay, (people seem to regard me just as an accountant, t~ey are only interested in my accountancy skills. They are not interested in me.' One hears that sort of complaint.

: I feel that's the case as well where you've got maybe certain qualities that people want you to develop, rather thari~~~~espond ,- . -

S : Yes, it is very important that at least some people know you in the round, know you at your best and at your worst, know you with regard to all your interests, all your activities. In a way that was one of the advantages of village life or life in a small community, though it might have had disadvantages too, that every- body knew all about you: You couldn't hide anything from anybody. Well, if you wanted to hide anything you had to try very har~ 4~nd this was not perhaps desirable.

It's certainly one of the things I've been appreciating most, Bhante. It seems like everything is going in the same direction and sometimes people

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: If you like, there is a continuity of purpose which goes through each activity you - do.

S : Well, each skilful activity, anyway! Maybe you took it for granted that no one would be doing anything unskilful anyway! Also there is the' point that even if you do have to regard someone as a skin bag full of every kind of filth for certain limited purposes, you probably shouldn't tell them so. So one must not take this section in this respect too literally, but place the emphasis I think really on trying to see people as individuals, without that being a pretence or£~rationalisation; but to try to see others as individuals, try to behave as an individual~ - and that will encourage other people to regard you and treat you as an individual. So I think this must be the emphasis in the FWBO within communities and centres, and especially I think people need to make a special effort in a mixed situation where there are both men and women. Must be very care- ful that the situation is not polarised along sexual lines and genuinely try to see the person of the opposite sex as an individual and relate to him or her as an individual.

: - . a problem -- when

all the communities - if all the communities are single sex and the work situations are, because ( I find certainly working with people of the opposite sex ~i~ doqn

S : I would say that for most people, to begin with,, it works the other way round. Because one is so used to this confused sort of mixed situation that it is helpful to withdraw as it were for a while into, say, a men's community or a women's community and within that community to learn to relate to as individuals, and then, as it were, to go out from that position of strength to relate to people of the opposite sex. I think that does help a lot of people.

Jri~h : I think I didn't say it very clearly. It is just~if you are totally in a single sex - or working in a single sex community you are only relating socially with the people.

S : Ah, yes. Right. Yes, I think there should be opportunities where you can relate, as it were, spiritually and if you get that opportunity where you can relate on a spiritual b~~~is to members of the opposite sex, you must be careful that you yourself by your unconscious behaviour don't, as it were, bring it down to the social level in the ordinary sense. Anyway, enough said. Except that the la~st sentence is "Then the gods pa d me profound reverence and, as they asked me to expound the Way, I enlightened them and they became Srota-apanas as a result." Why do you think the gods paid the Buddha 'profound reverence'? What's the point within the context of this ~CCt,OM?

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Gone beyond.

S : Wel~l, he had gone beyond craving, gone beyond attachment or one might even say, gone beyond d~a'flt>~

Would somebody like to read twenty seven?

"The Buddha said: "Those who follow the Way are like a piece of wood in the water, which floats along, touching neither bank, and which is neither picked up by men, intercepted by the gods, hindered by floating scum, nor rots upon the way. I am prepared to undertake that such a piece of wood will certainly reach the sea If those who study the Way are not misled by their feelings and desires,' not disturbed by any sort of depravity, and\*if they earnestly advance towards the unphenomenal, I am prepared to undertake that they will certainly attain to the Way."

S : The general sense of this, the general significance, is clear. It's a sort of summary of one parable in the Pali scriptures. Do you remember which one that is? It's the parable of the log. Let me see if I can find i~° Can anyone see 'Some Sayings of the Buddha' over there? (se~r~~£°~~) This is the parable in full:

"Once the Exalted One (that is to say the Buddha) was staying at Kosambi, on the bank of the River Ganges. Now the Exalted One saw a great log being carried down Ganges' stream, and on seeing it he called to the brethren, saying: 'Brethren, do ye see yonder great log being carried downstream?' "Yes, Lord.' 'Now, brethren, if a log does not ground on this bank or the further bank, does not sink in mid- stream, does not stick fast on a shoal, does not fall into human or non-human hands, is not caught in an eddy, does not rot inwardly, - that log, brethren, will float down to ocean, will slide down to ocean, will tend towards ocean. And

why? Because, brethren, Ganges stream floats down to ocean, slides down to ocean, tends towards ocean:

So this is all really that this section says, but here in the original sutta the Buddha goes on to explain what these details mean:

"In like manner, brethren, if ye do not ground on this shore or that shore, if ye sink not in mid-stream, if ye stick not fast on a shoal, if ye fall not a prey to beings human and non-human, if ye be not caught in an eddy, if ye rot not inwardly - then, brethren, ye shall float down to Nibbana, ye shall slide down to~ Nibbana, ye shall tend towards Nibbana. And why? Because, brethren, perfect view floats, slides, tends towards Nibbana."

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S : So what does this suggest, in a way?

s~rn&n:c: You have to give yourself the right conditions,' ~en ~o~ ~( 3tt t~re.

S : Yes, it's as though, if wrong conditions are removed, you have got almost a natural tendency, provided you've got right views, to grow, to develop. Anyway, there is a more detailed explanation:

"At these words a certain brother said to the Exalted One: 'What, Lord, is this bank, what is the other bank, what is sinking in midstream? What is sticking fast on a shoal? What is falling a prey to beings human or non-human? What is being caught' in an eddy? What is rotting inwardly?' "This bank'~ brother, is a name for the six personal spheres of sense-action. "That bank," brother, is a name for the six ~ternal spheres of sense-action." of ~£e-A~OfI That is to say the six personal spheres~are the five physical senses and the mind, and their corresponding consciousnesses. And the six external spheres of action are the corresponding six objects. One can say that sticking fast in these two banks is just getting caught up in the whole process of ~eption through the six senses, perception of their corresponding objects, becoming attached to those objects. Or one can interpret it more deeply, more philosophically~ as meaning getting caught up in the whole dualistic, subject/object relationship: Then 'sinking in midstream' is a name for the lure a,td ~the lust, ~Iat~:r5 to say craving; that's 'sinking in midstream'. Then 'sticking fast on ~ shoal' is a name for the conceit of self, egotism.

"And what, brother, is "being caught by humans"? In this matter, brother, a householder lives in society, rejoices with them that rejoice, sorrows with them that sorrow, takes pleasure with them that take pleasure, suffers with them that suffer, makes a link with all manner of business that befalls. This, brother, is 11being caught b humans." C~bt o~£r "ord~, ~Ltan~ILt?lta~o~ftrCI~ b{orAl~ ti~L And what, brother, is "being caught b;~~no5"nL~htuLLma1antas~~:) In this matter, brother, such and such a brother lives the holy life with the wish to be reborn in the company of some class of devas, with the thought "May I by virtue or by practice or by some austerity or holy living become a deva or one of t~e devas." This, brother, is "being caught by non- humans:"

How might we interpret that?

Immortality?

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S : Yes. Immortality in the Christian sense of going to heaven and living there, or just taking being happy, healthy and human as our object, as our ideal. Living a deva-like life here on earth, being a happy hippy! But a lot of the hippies I used to see in the good old days seemed to look rather sad:

Not very healthy.

S . Might have been as simple as that, yes.

Could it be hooked on the 'siddhis'?

S . Hooked on the 'siddhis'. Yes. Hooked on the para-normal, hooked on psychic phenomena, yes, indeed.

S~~~~~: Or even sitting on a black cushion facing a white wall.

S . Right. Yes. Well... maybe that's a bit different. No, that's a bit different. Not quite.

Where does that come from?

S : That's probably another obstacle altogether. It's an obstacle, of course.

Where does that come from?

: Some very strict sort of Eastern practices, ~~~icA 'r~ -

S : No, it's to do with something I mentioned some time ago. Years and years ago, at the beginning of the FWBO, when we just had this little basement below (Sa.'kura?) which was a shop, we only had a couple of classes a week, so a Zen group asked if they could use our shrine room on Mondays. So we agreed to that. In fact there were several little Zen groups at that time, and I came to understand that there was quite a lot of disagreement, not to say dispute, between them. Anyway some of them used to come and join in our class. But they would insist on sitting on their black cushion and even though everybody else faced the shrine, they'd insist on facing the wall. And then we discovered that there was quite a dispute among these different grou~~,~~ to what should be the exact size and shape of the cushion. And they seriously disagreed about these things! So this suggests over-attachment to purely incidentals: So this is a form of Si'I~Vr&tt~~~r~~aV~5~~ undue attachment to mere rules and external observances. So: "being caught in an eddy," brother11, is a name for the pleasures of the five senses.

Sometimes that can be a real eddy, a whirlpool, a vortex.

"And what, brother, is "rotting inwardly"? Herein, brother, a certain one is immoral, an evil-doer, impure, of suspicious behaviour, of covert deeds: he is no recluse, though a recluse in vows;

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S(ctd) :        liver not of the holy life, though vowed thereto: rotten within and full of lusts, a son of filth is he. Such, brother, is "rotting inwardly." It i~ vcr~ stron. So why this strong language?~hy this strong language, what is he talking about?

S~ioaa~Q ~Outwardly he is ~ro~~isy. S : He is talking about hypocrisy, perhaps he was conscious of deliberate hypocrisy. And he is condemning it very severely. Anyway, there is a bit more, butj~~~reafl~ rtitv~~t. So this is really the parable of the log. So in this section it appears a bit differently, there are different little touches also: "Those who follow the Way are like a piece of wood in the water, which floats along, touching neither bank, and which is neither picked up by men, intercepted by the gods, hindered by floating scum, nor rots upon the way. I am prepared to under- take that such a piece of wood will certainly reach the sea." If you do all the right things, engage in all the skilful activities, avoid unskilful activities, the Buddha guarantees that you will reach Nirvana: "If those who study t1l the Way are not misled by their feelings and desires that is to say their unhealthy feelings and neurotic desires, "not disturbed by any sort of depravity, and, if they earnestly advance towards the unphenomenal, I am prepared to undertake that they will certainly attain to the Way." So the Buddha is very emphatic ~e~c.

CarI~ :        Do you think that possibly this is one of the teachings that actually did come from the Buddha himself?

S : I think so. This sort of emphasis, whether in those precise words or not, I would think certainly came from the Buddha. We see this sort of emphasis repeated even in the Pali Canon. The Buddha sa>eS, I will guarantee that if you do this, such and such will be the result. It isn't anything to be taken on faith because you yourself can practise, you yourself can see that the effect is produced. Alright, on to the next point, then.

"The Buddha said: "Be careful not to depend on your own intelligence - it is not to be trusted. Take care not to come in contact with physical attractions- such contacts result in calamities. Only when you have reached the stage of an Arhan can you depend on your own intelligence."

S : Mm. Well, wha,t does this mean? What exactly does 'intelligence mean? What does 'depending on your own intelligence 'mean? What else have you to depend upon?

Teachers.

S : But then again, I mean how will you decide who is your teacher? Because presumably you have to use your own intelligence first of all even to recognise that you ~et~ to depend upon somebody else. And you have to decide who that somebody else is in accordance with your own intelligence, presumably. So what do you think this does mean?

Does he mean intelligence in terms of mind or freedom or

S : Well, we don't know what the original Chinese term is. But judging by the English version it means something pretty ordinary.

It's presumably like you were saying the other day about rational intelligence if there is no positive emotion.

S : Yes. One could look at it}~that way. But if it was an unenlightened intelligence, even though some emotion was there, even that would not help you very much. I think it sug gets more a sort of reserve about well:' an awarene~,t't~5~~e limitations of your own intelligence, your own capacity for judgement: So very often you have to make up your mind on the basis of very limited information, very limited understanding, so therefore we should proceed with caution: ~t's not that we can't - the Buddha said:" Be careful not to depend on your own intelligence." Well, perhaps that means more like - be careful not to depend too much. ° you have to depend to some extent because on what else will you depend?-Taking intelligence in the ordinary sense b~~t least you should have a proper awareness of it~s limitations and not place implicit confidence in it. Proceed carefully step by step and test all the time the results of ~~plyLM~ your own intelligence, whether you are~getting the right results, whether things are happening as your intelligence said that they would: I don't think we can take this saying at its face value, we can't take it literally. Even if it isn't to be trusted completely, well, what else have you got to work with?

: Anything you rely on, you would have to test that thing. If you're relying on somebody else you've got to test tt'ft in a careful way.

S : Yes.

: I've been feeling occasionally, even in the study group, sometimes that my understanding of what's actually being said, that sometimes I don't actually trust myself to understand it and interpret it in a way which might actually be what you're saying!2) Yet at the same time I've got to go on that because that's the only perception



(ctd) : I have but sometimes I get this funny feeling that it just isn' t.

S . Well, for instance~ this applies with regard to people, in deciding what attitude to adopt towards people. How to treat them, what to say to them. Well, you can only go on your own intelligence, so to speak, your own knowledge of them, your own understanding of them. And you shouldn't act or speak in such a way as to suggest you really do know all about them. In other words you mustn't be too decided or too dogmatic: There may be a lot of things you don't know about that person. A lot of things you have not taken into consideration. Therefore you should be a bit~tj0~~ 4bit reserved~ in your judgement. It's very easy to mis- judge people, misunderstand people~ due to lack of information, lack of understanding. Do you see what I mean? So it is in this sense that one should not depend on one's own intelligence. That is to say, not depend upon it absolutely. Not depend upon it as if to assum~,~~~ell, you d,o really know everything, because very often you don t. I mean, for instance suppose, just for the sake of argument, someone was not to turn up for the retreat when expected. It's very easy to jump to conclusions. Oh, they haven't bothered to get here on time. Maybe your 'intelligence, in inverted commas, tells you that and that's what you say:'Oh she hasn't bothered to turn up.' Then you discover later on she's had an accident en route and that is what has delayed her. So then you feel a bit sorry that you jumped to that hasty conclusion. Do you see what I mean? this is the sort of thing we are doing all the time. We are not sufficiently reserved in our judgements. We don't take into account the fact that we haven't got all the facts at our disposal, we don't know everything~ and one can extend this to all sorts of more complex situations. Very often we are very hasty in our judgements, especially our judgements of other people, as if we know all about them and we are in a position to come to a very definite conclusion almost as though we were a judge handing down sentence from the Bench (based on?)only a very small part of the picture. A little learning is a dangerous thing:

: How would you define intelligence, then?

S : Well, that is quite a queition, taking the word simply in English. It has been defined as the creative use of concepts, which is not a bad definition: Sometimes it is said there are three kinds of intelligence. Animal - what is it?...

Vegetable, mineral!

S : Human, animal and military, in that order.

: Eh? a

S : Well, it's military intelligence! That's a joke!

1k

S(ctd) : Intelligence implies not just understanding but quick-ness of understanding, flexibility of understanding.

: It really reminds me of the sort of attitude you have to have when you are doing scientific research: Because people tend to think that scientific theories are static things but they are not at all: You have to be prepared to change them as soon as new facts come up:

S : Yes: This is constantly modifying your hypotheses.

: I was thinking of strategy when you said military. I thought this sort of~~i~~, ~r~~iaih~

S No, no, military intelligence is the gathering of t\$tfli~u.ce~ ;.~. information, especially secret information for military purposes. So we have to use our intelligenc~ because we have nothing else to use and we hav£e~ri'ttle enough of that: And we have to use it with an awareness of its own limitations, of our limitations, and not jump to conclusions about people or ( )situations. It's very, very easy ~to ~O I have mentioned bef re that people are always inviting me to generalise~~e~ what do you think about this, what do you think about that? Asking me for off~the-cuff opinions on something that sometimes requires a lifetime of study, thought and research:

Maybe they think (you've already done that?). Take it as read.

S : Well, it would be very nice if I had, but in some ~ASes I have to admit that my knowledge is distinctly limited. So one just has to accept that and not be tempted into these rash generalisations. Sometimes people think, well, that's an area that everybody's familiar~with. But it may not be as obvious or as easy as that.

Excuse me, but in respect of what we were talking about the other day Cwith regard to'.)(realism?) and intuition. Could you say that the intelligence is sort of separate and it is more a facility to use the information rather th~~~"&ft~~rceive it?

S : One could say that, but it is also perhaps the capacity to perceive in what way information could be extended: I mean, where information is to be found, how it is to be got at. I think this is also included in intelligence. For instance, how to use a library, how to look up references and how to put your hands on information quickly. I think this is part of general intelligence. I mean how to, as it were, manage your own knowledge, how to deploy your knowledge, how to extend your knowledge: I do think this is all part of intelligence.

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: Sort of like a gathering and a (lot of?)ability to...

S : Mm, yes. Intelligence is more than just maintaining, so to speak, the present level of knowledge. It is definitely extending it, amplifying it) deploying it. And hence the definition of the creative use of

consciousness, that intelligence in the true sense is creative. You are sort of thinking for yourself and seeing the possibility for further departures. So an intelligent person is not just a person who knows things or a person who has knowledge, but a person who is able to make effective use of that knowledge, whether theoretical or practical, and also to bring it into play quickly as well as effectively. An intelligent person can not only answer a new question but answer it quickly. Intelligence, one could also say, is the capacity to deal with a new situation, a situation which is without precedent in your experience. It is the capacity to employ, to mobilise your information to meet the demands of the new situation. So intelligence is inherently adaptable, hence creative. It's your capacity to apply your mind to a new situation, drawing upon your past experience and your existing knowledge but not being limited by them.

: In' relation to that, if you ( ) in situations and then~it sometimes feels to me that I have to go round and talk to everyone because you've then got to try to communicate that, especially if tL~~a large number of people and:..

S : Well, that would be the intelligent thing to do! That's to say if the tiev possibilities you have seen or foreseen involve the co-operation of a number of other people, t is the intelligent thing to do not to take their co-operation for granted but to take them into your confidence and consult them and talk the matter over with them. That's the intelligent thing to do.

(end of side one)

S : I'd better repeat that. Unless you really are the boss, and that's not likely to be the situation in a co-op. In a co-op you're all bosses, which can some- times make life a little difficult! So, "The Buddha said:"Be careful not to depend on your own intelligence - it is not to be trusted." Well, it cannot be trusted absolutely, be aware of your £or its) limitations. I don't think this sentence can be taken as meaning more than that. ~n6 tA~n "Take care not to come in contact with physical attractions - such contacts result in calamities." Well, how literally can one take this? ( ) of watering down the Buddha's teachings too much.

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S(ctd) : "Take care not to come in contact with physical attractions," well, is that possible? Can you eliminate physical attractions altogether, or contact with physical attractions altogether? ~tWhat a about food? I mean to some extent you to?~t~ in contact with things you feel are attractive~ 's~\A\$(~~~ &i,~ attractioh IS unskil~fub but be able nonetheless to control yourself and not allow the unskil~ful reaction to arise:

~~~s~ : Especially if you are working in a restaurant! : We were talking a few days out  
avoiding situations which cause craving. ago,~

S : Yes~:l~wt#ell, you can certainly avoid extreme situations but you cannot avoid all
situations, can you ? I mean for instance, when you go on a retreat you remove yourself from
the grosser forms of distraction, like extreme noise, TV sets; but there are still the ~rds the
occasional cow. You can't remove yourself ~rom distractionS ob'sI
ftt~t~r~o~~~~completely. But certainly you can remove yourself from the more extreme
ones, at least from time to time, and you should do so. But just removing from distractions or
takin~,care not to come into physical attraction~is not th~l~nswer.

: It's a question of what you are distracted from as well, isn't it? Because things like
listening to the birds is not going to distract from what you are trying to do

S . Well, it might, if you are trying to concentrate. Some people find the sound of the
birds quite irritating when they are trying to meditate.

I don't find them irritatin~~

S : Cows were quite an annoyance to the community for a while, they used to make
such a loud mooing noise every morning before they were fed: (~rcr~+t ~~~~) Yes, I think
the Buddha is probably addressing monks who are living in the forest, in little viharas,
secluded places, so that they can carry this out But you can't avoid coming in contact with
what you find physically attractive, completely. But certainly the grosser forms of attraction
you can very often avoid and (~) should do so. Habitual distractions you should perhaps
avoid. Avoid working in a job which ~r~ovides you with constant distractions, with just~one
sort of stimulation, even one sort of association. You would not really choose to work in a
butcher's shop, even though you weren't actually killing art~rA'~n~. What sort of physical
attractions do you think the Buddha has in mind here?

Women.

2Yq

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S : I suppose in respect of monks, yes, women would be per~aps
quite high on the list. But even monks can't avoid women completely, even
mendicant monks, because they go from house to house f'or alms and more often
than not it is the lady of the house who fills the monk's begging
bowl and he is not supposed to look up but down into his begging bowl
regardless of who is giving it. Even so he is aware of somebody there and
he can be aware it is a woman and not a man. So even then you can't
completely avoid coming into contact with whatever is particularly attractive.
point has to come when you have to make a firm resolve to change
your mental state.

: I think there was a story'about thatt,~0monks carrying a girl across a stream.

S : Yes, that is right. Well, no, one of them carries her, that's the point of the story. That's the famous Zen story. You must know this! There's this famous Zen story, I think it comes in 'iOi Zen Stories'. There are two wandering monks on their travels and~ they came to the edge of a river and they were about to wade across. And there was a very pretty girl just standing there in a beautiful new kimono and clearly not wanting to wade across because she would spoil her nice new kimono. So one of the monks, without any ado, just picked her up, slung her across his shoulder, carried her, waded through the water, dumped her down on the other side and continued on his way with the other monk beside him who hadn't touched the woman. And for quite a while the other one didn't say anything but he was sort of really consumed with indignation, and he said to the first one: "Don't you realise you're a monk? You are not supposed to touch women, you are not supposed to carry the~~~ So the first monk turned round and he said: "I put that woman down some hundreds of yards back, are you still carrying her?" You see? So this illustrates the point that it's the mental attitude that really counts. But again one must not use this sort of story as an excuse for rationalisation. There are quite a lot of monks who can't carry pretty girls across rivers without it giving rise to unskillful mental attitudes. Some experienced old monks might be able to do this, even some young ones, but it's not to be taken for granted. Some are better off not coming anywhere near them. Anyway, that's the story. One just has to be sensible. If you find that certain situations tend to produce unskillful mental states in you, if you possibly can you avoid those situations. It's just common sense. It's no more than that. But recognise that in the long run it's your mental attitudes which you need to control, to change and your withdrawal from that particular situation is just to give you a real opportunity to change your mental state permanently.

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: But you can find an object for attraction in lots of situations, ~o::' QMC ~ ~i~t~er.

S Why, yes, indeed. "Take care not to come in contact with physical attractions - such contacts result in calamities. Only when you have reached the stage of Arhan can you depend on your own intelligence." That is to say depend on it implicitly. Well clearly it is not intelligence at this stage quite in the ordinary sense. It is more like your own inner light, and even an Arhan doesn't know everything. Anyway on to 29. Who's going to read?

"The Buddha said: "Take care to avoid looking on the beauty of women and do not converse with them. If you do (have occasion to) converse with them, control the thoughts

which run through your minds. As a Sramana, on coming in contact with the impure world, one must be like the lotus which remains unsullied by the mud (from which it grows). Think of old women as~our mothers, of those older than yourselves as of your elder sisters, of those younger than your- selves as of your younger sisters, and of very young ones as your daughters. If you long for liberation, banish all evil thoughts."

S : And read that little footnote.

: i.e. Do not take risks. ~void 0,'p~~%L~i~jU ~rt&~~tatiO~, ~~ rL½'tks ~ ~Ot&? oWs ofis~~tio~ of 3~Qj(4~~~~~fl S : No, note number 2. "This applies only to monks, not to laymen, who may marry." - ~hat 'note' strikes a slightly odd note. It suggests almost if you are a layman it does not matter about ~the spiritual life'~ b~~~ that involves what I would regard as a completely unreal or baseless distinction between the monk and the layman. The layman is also concerned with spiritual it~e, spiritual development, if he is a Buddhist layman certainly, if he has Gone For Refuge. But anyway here we see a well-known example of trying to - what shall I say? - counter a certain conditioning or certain tendency with another more positive conditioning, a more positive tendency. Do you see what I~a~ when the monk is advised to think~~ l~ women as of of your mothers, as those oldertA~~~~~ a your elder sisters and so on. That is to say to counter the sexual instinct, especially the e~clusive concentration on women as, so to speak, sexual objects. Do you see what I mean?

We try to see them in non-sexual terms. By calling up, say, if it's an older woman, the image of your mother or elder sister etc. Do you think this is feasible within Western society for men, or for women; on the other hand? Do you think it is feasible?

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: Yes, yes. S : Yes. : No. S : For some people, anyway.

Eve : For some people maybe, but it seems to me that people are quite often sexually confused, especially in regard to their parents, and so, like, I haven't had any problems, but I have spoken to quite a few women, and men, who, their first attraction, sexual attraction, was to their brother and sister.

S : Right. Well, since the Buddha's day we have lost a lot of our innocence because Professor Freud has come along and we have learned quite a lot about ourselves from him. So even the attitude towards mother/sister, mother/father is not quite so 'pure', inverted commas, as people used to think. So there is certainly this to be taken into consideration.

: So this would just depend on your own experience?

S : It would depend on your own experience, your own back-ground, yes.

Eve : Actually I think what you were saying before about relating to someone as an individual -

S : It covers everything in a way, doesn't it? : Yes.

S : I mean, apparently, in the Buddha's day it seems that sort of language was not current, it was not possible to put things in that way. But that does really express, in a way, the spirit of the Buddha's teaching. You just see other human beings primarily as human beings, as budding individuals, and you try just to concentrate upon - I won't say that aspect of it, but not even an aspect, it is the central part, the core of them, what they really are, that they are essentially living and growing people. So one should make that awareness, that consciousness, the basis, the centre, of one's relationship with them, whether they are younger, older or whatever, male or female, rich or poor. This really does cover everything, doesn't it? In a nutshell, so to speak.

Christine : I think to the extent you see yourself in that sort of way it becomes easier to see other people

S : Yes, indeed.

Christine : When you forget that you're trying to do that and project that on (to other people. (?)

S : Quite a lot of men are just trying not to see women as their mother! For many men 'mother' has got all

S(ctd) : the wrong sort of associations. Maybe there is the same thing for women and 'father'. I mean it suggests a very positive mother image, a very positive father image: If you have that, then you are fortunate and you can use it in this sort of way. But if you haven't got a positive father image or a positive mother image, what are you to do? If father to you means a dreadful tyrant or if mother means a possessive old hag? Well, what are you to do then? Well, yes, you can fall back upon just seeing people as individuals. This seems the simplest really. Even if you are able to see people as mother or father, younger or elder brother or sister in a positive, way. But is this, is it actually possible to do Is it sufficiently concrete, sufficiently powerful? Doesn't it sound a bit abstract, seeing other people as individuals, even seeing men as individuals? Does it seem strong enough? Would it really work?

: It depends upon your friendship. : It is dependent on -metta . S :
 Pardon? Carla : I think it is really dependent upon metta .

S : Ah! If it's backed up by a practice of metta bhavana , yes. Because we mustn't forget that in the second stage of the metta we avoid taking as our as near and dear friend, someone of the object~~ur opposite sex, don't we? But we end up at the end directing metta towards all living beings and some- times we explicitly mention all men and all women, as if to suggest by it that when metta is actually being generated it is to be applied equally to all. Do you see what I mean? But actually to generate it you may need to observe, probably will need to observe, restrictions of that sort. But once it is really developed, well, those restrictions don't apply. I mean, if you do have good friends of the opposite sex whom you can really see as individuals, well, that will help you because you have got some sort of model in your experience when you do find yourself seeing any particular person exclusively in sexual terms.

Trish : They always make women the objects. What about homo- sexuality? Was that just not prevalent?

S : Ah, well, this is a question which I was asked a number of times in classes in connection with the metta bhavana . Someone says, 'Well, saying you're gay. Well, what do you do?' Well '4 '1nd£that case, well, it's simple, you just direct your -metta in the second stage to someone of the opposite sex

S(ctd) : because that's the way it works for you. But then of course some clever person says, 'Suppose you are bi- sexual?' So I then say, well, just take any person, if there is such whom you regard as a friend, whether male or female, but towards whom you don't have any

specifically sexual feeling. There is always an answer! at ~A~r ~iqc : I asked whether there was much homosexuality in India~?

S : That's very difficult to say, because we don't get much information on the subject in the surviving Indian literature~ and all what one might describe as ethni religions are very much against not only homosexuality but - any form of sexual activity oth~r than the straight heterosexual activity usual in marriage. Judaism adopts that attitude, Hinduism certainly does, Z?roastr1Aflism certainly does. So the India~ attitude on the whole, including the ~odern In~dian attitude~ is very anti-homosexual: - - And as regards the Buddhist literature, as regards the Buddhist scriptures, I don't think there is any reference to homosexuality in the Sutras. In fact I think there probably wasn't an understanding at that time of what homosexuality actually was. I think that's very doubtful. They seem to have mixed it up with herniaphroditism. There is a word for hermaphrodite, but there is no word really for homosexual. - But anyway when~it comes to the Vinaya, it is quite clear that in the case of monks no kind of sexual activity was permitted at all. And heterosexual activity, ho-mosexual activity, auto-erotic activity are all mentioned in all sorts of varieties. But it is 4a si~hou h t~he~aure uled out for the monk~ at 1~a5£,~tykatr~~ dl IL~a~it\$° 'ere, placed on the same level(. Do you see what I mean? There is no suggestion at all that one is better than the other or that one is worse than the other. They are all placed on exactly the same level; they are all forms of sexual activity and therefore, for -one who has taken a vow of celibacy, they are all equally out. That is the position according to the Vinaya. But in ancient IndiaS transvest~ism is given a sort of s-social recognition, and this is partially homosexual. That is to say there are in Indian society groups of people, technically men, who are transvestite, that i~t5~y dress- in women's clothing. Many people don't know that they are men. They dress in saris and they behave like women. They iuake up like women, and they sing and play in connection with marriages and similar f - Th~y~,ar~~c~~a d C-' f,injuras'?) which is an Urdu word, actualTy,~ e£y are quite well known, though a lot of people, when they see the ~ind~~~~t~~~~ so~':~ o~, - they don't know what they really are: They are popularly regarded as eunuchs: ('~injura :~?) means

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S(ctd) : eunuch but actually they are what we would call transvestites. - When I was in India this time, they had a conference in Delhi behind closed doors. They would not admit the Press, and they discusse4krarious problems that they were facing in their profession, whatever they might have been. And there is quite an overlap between this sort of tr~vest:~ism and prostitution on a certain level - Anyway there was quite a write~up in the papers about the conference that they hada But - - not in the least in a sensational way; L~1~S part of Indian traditional life. But that is the -only exception I am aware of. Transvest~ism is sort of institutionalised in this sort of way. I mean I once saw a party of these~~ind~going around in (.Marpur?) I think it was. And a friend of mine told me what they were, otherwise I wouldn't have known, because they were behaving exactly like women.

: We used to have them inKt~~.a as well,~nd they used to do similar things, dancing, they go round entertaining as well.

-S : Ah, yes. It's usually singing and dancing. tA~~ a~e~ ~~ Or playS~ ~ because they can play both parts.

S : Yes.

: I find it quite easy to relate in this way as it suggests here. I think it is probably because of my social background, for we have quite definite relationships with people, and even if you don't have any brothers, the first cousins are like brothers, sharing the same grandmother or grandfather. They have quite strong relationships. But it is not like treating somebody as a father or as a brother. It is more like having the same kind of attitude towards them. It is not like replacing them.

S : Yes. It's not such an artificial procedure as it might seem to u-s here in the West~just talking about it in this way. For instance, in Bengal, women are very often addressed as 'mother' by someone who is not related to them. Even little girls, even little unmarried girls of se'vefl or eight, will be addressed - as ~~.ma'~ which means mother, out of politeness. It means just to distance the5m~'a~ it were. This is quite al:n'~t ural part of social life. It does have that sort of somewhat inhibiting effect. But for us in the West to adopt it sort of consciously. ~ s~~9cJr - might be rather difficult. But, though, you did think iC was feasible for some people?

Yes, I think so.

C~r~~~ne : I was just trying to imagine myself doing these things.

S : Yes. I think it depends upon th,e nature of the mother

image or father image or brother~o~'sister image. SwIe~~a: I used to think of my brother as my parent because he

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(ctd) : was the only sort of elder kind of person that I used to have in my life ~o't3tast:t~; ~
At S~AooI A~~C~ti~w£

- ~But ~f~e, if you treat someone with a kind of distance -I am speaking as if someone was young- Lt might help to thein to treat you also as a kind of sister or brother:

S : I think there is also the question of behaving as what you are. That if you are old, not consciously trying to behave very young or in a way almost to pretend that you,°,~~~~

.7~oun~~ to accept yourself as old and behave in a way~apprOpriate to an older person. Do you see what I mean? Suppos~ng you can't run and jump, well, why try to do so - Lf it is not natural to you in a way that it is natural for a younger person?

: But if you can then it's unfortunate for you...: S : If you can genuinely, well, that's alright. : If you have to be -

S : But not sort of to put on an act. This is what I'm talking about, not putting on an act of being young in an artificial way when you're really not young or vice-versa. I mean nowadays children are in a great hurry to grow up, to act old when they are really not old. You often see their youthful inexperience peeping through.

5~I~~~a: Even dolls are dressed in grown-up clothing with high heels-- -

S : OA, don't bring on the question of women's dress, otherwise I shall be going on and on! I'm glad to see make-up has been practically abolished within the FWBO. Well, if it hasn't been it is very discreet. Why disguise your natural features, not to say your natural beauty? Why plaster it with paint and varnish?

° Well...

: When you lre around the Centre ~I tii~ then you go ou?~~ou find it quite stran~et0 £~~~~~ fjnd ~ woman with thick make-up ~n~ - like she's got a mask o~~~~~r~if~ic.

S : Well, yes, I think sometimes it is employed as a mask, a thick layer people call it war paint. ~d also it's really bad for the health because a lot of women (X~ ~~a~~ ~u~~ got atc c~ ~&t~ s~~ic ~1) - a lot of women use cheap make~up and the effect, the chemical effect of the make-up on the skin, is really bad. Y~ can see in the case of women who have used make-up~perhaps~ all their lives, their skins are dreadful and really, in one's own interests from a purely health point of view, at least one shouldn't use cheap make-up. If you insist on using Thake~llp~ just use the~very best! ~~t you can't afford that any- way!
- ----- So ap and water - just water:

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S~iocas~: It used to be considered quite wrong to go out without it. It would be like going out without any clothes on!

S : You see fa~hions change~ and in the Victorian period a woman would never admit to using make-up. It should never be obvious. They used to speak of giving their cheeks a glow or something like that. But now it's so blatant an~ some of it's so crudely done without any aestheti~sense, it's really dreadful, as you said, horrific. There's no need for it. Most women look much more, to use the word4~attractive, in~a human sense, they look much more attractive without it. They look more genuinely human.

~rIa : Softer and gentler, their faces look softer.

S : Softer and gentler. Some women don't want to look softer and gentler, but anyway they? re more themselves without it. A~ttr ~JI~ °tt1~ yourself that you want to be, surely? Your morale shouldn't need this artificial boost. You shouldn't need that painted smile.

: I think it also relates to sort of not being the age t~~ you are and accepting it, because I know on the Tube, actually coming on the retreat, I saw this woman enter the Tube and she was all dressed up as though she was 17 or 18) and then looking at her face you could see she was ~sixty~~

S : Well, you know what they call this - they call it old mutton dressed up as young lamb! No, one should not try not to look one' 5 age. That doesn't mean that there is any artificial standard of behaviour for how old people or young people should behave, but act in a way that is natutal to you.

S~epi'~s~: That applies to much more than just age, doesn't it? Because some people try to act as if they have got a different temperament to the way they actually have. They try to appear frivolous or serious or whatever.

S : Or cool.

Yes. yOf4 ~o~~ S : 'Cool' is one of the most ~bjectionable~~~~ke every- thing very cool½. You're not impressed by anything.

tve : The Friends is quite positive in that respect because I have noticed that there are not many people around now that get really involved that do remain cool.

S : It was a bit of a hippy thing at one time, to be very cool. It was quite alienated.

: It's also quite lhard to tell their ages. S : Anyway!

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~~t~~s~: Isn't this 'cool' rather like equanimity?

S . Pardon?

: Isn't this 'cool' rather like equanimity? : No, n'~.

S : Not really.

: What does 'cool' mean?

S . Well, it means you~L~re trying to suggest you're so sophisticated, you've seen so much pf life you are not - - - - ~~ impressed by anything. It's an attitude almost of superiority.

~h-ii't: It's only if it's an act it's Object~o~able,{~ ~omebody's - sort of pretending, they are covering themselves up with it.

S . Yes,yes.

: Isn't that the aame with make-up? I mean C) very much against make-up. I mean I think you can if you really want, really feel like putting it on, ,~~'~ all fl~~~.

S . But what ~ake~s'~you really feel like putting it on?

: It can just be fun sometimes. Like decoration.

S : Ah, like decorating the Christmas tree! Yes, well, yes, in a way I agree with that, up to a point. Because in India they do this, -women --do -sort of decorate them- selves, not only with a bit 9f make-up. It's not quite make-up in the western s~~g~'~7~ut yes, they do. They not only paint their nails ~k they colour the inside of their hands an~ t"~ SoJc~ of t'tej~ jLCt.

It's ritual for them, isn't it?

S . - Yes. It looks quite pretty, ~ne might say, but it's also traditional and standard. So~""'4o~e might say, why not enhance whatever good points one ha~, hut it is more like enhancing rather than completel - disguising. Do you see what I mean? I mean in India'~Oh~ey use eye shadow. Men also use that i~&~tarts of India, they put it on children.

: I used to be - - angry with my mother for putting colour on my cheeks when I was supposed to go out to tea. I thought it was terribly insulting~and I didn't see why one shouldn't be pale. You know-, I had to look healthy!

S : And you wanted to look your unhealthy self! ~ilor 'Jas .~~ ~s"bu~~ii3.
° It was in India. I was only about three or four, but it was very annoying.

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: What do you think about earrings, Bhante?

S : Adornment is alri~ht. I don't object to adornment.

I think if I have to put it I object to disguise. And also of course anything which does

affect the health & the quality of the skin, like cheap powder, cheap face powder. Anything which is for enhancing a woman's appearance - you might say that is justifiable. If she wants to enhance her appearance - is something that really makes her look ugly, like a rash of lipstick, carelessly applied, smudged at the edges and all - or - when she smokes a cigarette it comes off. It really looks dreadful: I'm not objecting on moral grounds but on aesthetic grounds. I think it's only natural that anybody should be able to enhance their appearance and adorn themselves and I think it's a pity that in the West this privilege, if it is a privilege, tends to be reserved for women though some men are beginning to sort of avail themselves of it. But I think both men and women should be able to, as it were, innocently adorn themselves. It doesn't mean simply emphasising secondary sexual characteristics but, yes, adorning oneself, making oneself look, I won't say nicer, but more attractive in the aesthetic as distinct from the biological sense. I think this is quite acceptable. It isn't spiritual to be dowdy and plain. Do you see what I mean? But in a more aesthetic way.

I read of a tribe in India where the men made head-dresses of flowers for themselves when they wanted to attract a woman.

I think you are thinking of a certain kind of parrot! I was reading about a bird in the Far East, called the Bower Bird. The male bird makes a bower or garden and decorates it with flowers and feathers artistically placed and the male bird with the best bower - wins! The female bird casts a discerning eye over all the little bowers and (picks) the particular one that takes her fancy. It is really extraordinary because it is a kind of displacement of plumage. The bird is not a very handsome bird but he goes to extraordinary lengths to make this bower for his bride. - U - from the evolutionary point of view it is quite fantastic. I think I took a cutting of that. There was a little write-up about it in the paper under the science notes of the week. Very extraordinary. - to say, as if within animal species, even among birds, there is a sort of aesthetic instinct. This is a sort of rudimentary artist. It was really quite strange from that point of view. But anyway, I don't think there is any objection from the spiritual point of view - people just adorning themselves - a sort of natural pleasure as from narcissism. But I think this should be distinguished from trying to make oneself sexually attractive, with the emphasis on the sexual attractiveness. And I think it shouldn't be limited to only one sex. I think that's unfair!

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Bhante, a friend of mine was doing bio-medical engineering and he was telling me about the effect of high heels which, usually your foot takes the tension up and so what effectively happens, if you're on high heels - is that the shock is going up your spine and the only part of you that is not actually connected to this is your eyeballs. So they sort of rattle around. And if you watch women - he said he went and stood up in Oxford St. when high heels were very much the thing - and they were walking into him all the time because they could not quite see straight.

I really - I'm afraid you have started me again! High heels are dreadful! It's really so sad. I saw it in the queue the other week, a very nice little Indian girl of about 17 or 18. I don't know whether she was

arrived from India or whether she was born and brought up in this country. But anyway, a very nice little Indian girl in a nice sari but with the most horrible high-heeled boots, and the heels were like this - no exaggeration - like that! And she was a little girl, and I thought what on earth was this doing to her posture? Her whole body? It's really dreadful. And again, I mean a few years ago I had the experience of seeing two little teenage girls tottering along on these high heels and one of them was saying to the other: "Oh, I really like these boots, they're ever so comfortable." She'd convinced herself, she was kidding herself that they were comfortable, but the poor little soul was really suffering and putting on a brave front and saying: "Oh, they're ever so comfortable." I say, why do they do it? Please tell me why they do it? Is it fashion? If so, well, what is fashion? Why does one follow fashion?

: Attractiveness?

S Indian women don't follow fashion, they wear the same old sari~

: Ah~yes, they do!

S : ~r~t:~Ooi~cas;f:~~~~shL?~rJ b~~~~t'f~(~~~~~ It's the men~w?io have taken to Western dress1 many of them, not the women; they stick to the sari.

: But they have fashions in colours and patterns.

S : Very subtle. They do have regional differences.

But someone told me they did have fashions that change in variations of the blouses, ~nd ~olo~r

S : Every four or five hundred years there is a slight variation! I think that westernised women have got this idea of fashion so they modify the sari a bit, but usually it is just a regional variation. The Gujarati sari is different from the Punjabi sari, well, Punjabis don't have saris, or from the Bengali saris.

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Well, there is also man-made materials then. They adopt those. That is definitely a sort of status and fashion.

S . For instance the voile sari, the voile sari is a quite modern thing introduced by the...

Georgette~.

S : Georgette saris introduced by the Maharani of ~IV,i~ekr. ~h&y
w&rt nut K~Q~~ ~ufvrc ~at. Silk.~... b~t o~~.

S : Silk saris, yes. But broadly- speaking there is no change compar - -.
-- the changes in this country. So, I mean, that suggests (a bit of amateur sort of
psycho~o ising bere!) suggests more psychological
stabiliz~t"~tqo~~&n, tUat th~y don't feel the need to have major changes, or
there are just sort of subtle vari~nts. They wear a different border or put different
flowers in their hair or extra jewellery or something like that.
But they manage to look very attractive in their saris. I mean a sari suits, it seems
(well, here I am singing in favour of saris!) a sari seems to suit any kind of
woman. It's kind to ~r figure. If you are very fat, the sari is kind to ~ur
figure. Unless it's a Mar~~ttan sari. If you are ~t~in the sari is kind
to your figure. You couldn't wish for anything better!
-o~~es, c~t~f~f~ 40&i't So anyway, this is to make tkatdi~tinction
between~dress with an eye to ~tr~c~~n~gt~~~~op~~ite sex. But, certainly,
adornment of oneself is an expression, one might say, of
self-love, metta. It shouldn't be an expression of narcissism but just of one's own
metta towards oneself. And actually you find this in the case of some women,
if they don't like themselves, they won't take trouble with
themselves. Isn't it so? Yes? And a sign that a woman is in a better
psychological state is very often that she pays more attention to her
appearance. Maybe it goes for men too, I'm not so sure, but it certainly goes for
women. So when a woman does, as it were, take more pride in her
appearance, very often if she has been in an unhealthy mental state, it is a sign
that she is on the way to recovery.

: It could happen that they are trying to be unattractive to men~if they find that very
disturbing.

S : Does that actually happen, do you think? VOLCtS : Yes, yes. it does.

: It seems that some women tend to be overweight almost to avoid having to deal with
tl',~t.

S : Overweight? ~You mean they deliberately....? : Yes, it often seems
like that. S : But some men like heavily built women!

r

: Well, it's a sort of stereotype, (Don't it, of the West, slimmer.

~~(ocf : ~i~~itc~~~s~~~men's liberation>. jiiany women - quite
definitely said they ~O~lr~ dress~~o please themselves, and --
abnfirst-- th-a~ often dressed in v~~y dull colours. I mean they are not going
to dress in the way that is put out by, ~he media as being.

Right, right. S : Yes.

~ott : I mean it's changed a bit now. S . So it's almost an
extreme reaction?

Yes.

S : In other words they didn't see -a distinction between
dressing to enhance sexual attractiveness and dressing just to
adorn your natural appearance.

: Someone actually said to me the other day thbt she, it was a woman, she was dressing
colourfully, and she was having this conversation with a man who thought that she was quite
sexually attractive and that she put that out. And she said: " Well, why do you think that?"
And he said: " You wear bright colours." And he obviously saw t~4t.... -

(tape end)

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S: - that transmits.

Trish : Certainly, colour, being fairly outgoing and colourful,
it's got those sort of connotations here.

S: Yes, because it means you are more noticeable anyway. And also
there is the association of people like nuns, they dress in
black. On the Continent, in say Italy or Greece, respectable
women dress in black, everything black.

Noel : () widows do that.

S: Yes. But I think probably the most important factor is your
actual behaviour. And even if you're wearing bright colours, I
mean if you're not intending that as a signal to members of
the opposite sex your whole behaviour will convey that.

Eve : If they can't perceive that then in a way that's their problem.

S: Well it may be your problem too if you're brought by circumstances into proximity. You have to give off sort of loud, clear signals, 'Look, I'm an individual, you're an individual too. That's how I want to relate. I'm wearing bright colours to please myself, just because I'm happy in myself.' I think within the Friends that is probably generally understood, that colourful clothes are just an expression of one's heightened positivity, whether in the case of men or in the case of women; it doesn't have any other significance. Outside it may be different. I'm not so familiar with things outside as I am with things inside.

?

Trish : It's just been talking to the other people again (in) that's been one of the things we've all

had to sort of pull back a bit from, colour and -
: Outwardgoingness.

Trish : Just don't have that same level of implication at home as they do here.

S: I think that's very unfortunate, then, because it's almost inhibiting you from expressing your positivity.
on the other hand,

Carla : We'd look a drab lot compared to Americans, who dress extremely colourfully, bright, loud colours, you wouldn't look particularly out of the ordinary.

S: Maybe you just have to wear a dark cloak when you go out! when you come - back into the FWBO you take it off. But it does make difficulties, clearly, if a certain kind of behaviour is acceptable, a certain kind of positive behaviour is acceptable, say, within the FWBO and it's understood correctly, but outside is just misunderstood or misinterpreted. That's a great pity. Anyway, it seems most people feel happy to be colourful if left to their own devices, so to speak.
there,

Alright, let's leave it~ then.

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S : Alright, we come on to section 30. Would someone like to read?

: "The Buddha said: "Those who follow the Way are like straw which must be preserved from fire. A follower of the Way who experiences desire must put a distance between himself and (the object of his) desire."

S : So we're still on this subject of desire, especially neurotic desire, craving. What do you think about this policy of keeping the straw separate from the fire?

Trish : Sometimes you forget straw can burn.

S : Yes, you forget that straw is inflammable. Really this is making a point that we have in fact already dealt with, in the case of the beginner, so to speak. It probably is advisable to avoid those situations in which erotic desire is stimulated. To withdraw as far as possible, but nonetheless one has to recognise that one uses that opportunity of withdrawal as a means for strengthening your mind. So that eve~~~ually you can be in that situation, if circumstances require, without it real'~yaf~ecting you. And of course there are some on ~you can't avoid. You can't apply this sort of policy unreservedly. In some ways fire is everywhere. Anything may () You are straw and fire is everywhere, it's only really a question of avoiding it when you're particularly dry. The more fiery sort of situations. Alright, let's go on to the next section, which looks at the question from a somewhat different angle. Someone read that?

: "The Buddha said: "There was one who, being unable to subdue his sexual passions, wished of his own accord, to cut off his penis. I said to him: 'To do that will not be so good as to put a stop to (the root of the evil) in your mind. The mind is like Kung Ts'ao. If Kung Ts'ao desists, his followers will stop also. If mental depravities continue, what is the use of cutting off your penis?' I then repeated this verse for him: 'Desire springs from your thoughts. Thought springs from discernment (of matter). When the two minds are both stilled, there is neither form nor action.' I added that this verse was first spoken by Kasyapa Buddha."

S : This comes back to the question of mental states, hm? It's not so much the physical sense organ, it's not so much the physical body, it's the mental state which is operating through the body. You may have difficulty, say, observing the 'se'c'o'nd precept, but that doesn't mean you are going to cut off your hand 'so that you can be sure of avoiding theft. It isn't, in -a way, so simple as that. So one doesn't necessarily lessen your chances of committing a particular unskilful action by mutilating

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S(ctd) : the particular organ with which it is normally committed. The important thing is a change in the mental state. So the Buddha says: "The mind is like Kung Ts'ao." The note says: "A powerful official of the Han Dynasty whom none dared disobey, an obvious interpolation." "If Kung Ts'ao desist's, his followers will stop also." Yes, in a 'sense this is an interpolation because Kung T's'ao was in Chinese history and not in ancient Indian history, and this is supposed to be the Buddha 'speaking. But nonetheless there is a comparison like this in the Pali Scripture's. The Buddha says that if the cave of the bandits is found, well then, their foray's over the countryside will be stopped. In the same way, if you tackle unskilful activity at its source in the mind, then the unskilful activities will be brought to an end. Simply to mutilate the physical body in any way doesn't really help. You might just as well

blind yourself. Well, you'd have to cut off every organ, every limb. In fact, in the end, you'd have to commit suicide in order to avoid committing unskillful actions. But that is not permitted in Buddhism. So it is the mind eventually that you must work on. You may withdraw temporarily from a situation in which your craving is stimulated, you may even turn away your eyes from certain things, you may close your ears to certain sounds, but in the end it's your mind itself that you've got to tackle. And you should utilise any respite that you may have in the way of a retreat, anything of that sort, or a period of meditation, to strengthen your mind. Because so long as you are living in this sam'sara, so long as you have a physical body, there will not be any lack of fire for your straw. It's better to make sure, let us say, changing the comparison a little, that the straw is well and truly dampened, 'so' that it won't catch fire. Or even that it's transformed into asbestos! Or even into something....

: Gives you lung cancer!

S : Or even transformed into something which would burn without being consumed as it were, because in the end, in Zen terms, the object is that you should be a lotus flower blooming in the midst of the fire. It's not easy, but that is the ideal. So the Buddha repeats the verse: "Desire springs from your thoughts. Thought springs from discernment (of matter)." One could say that the Buddha is referring to the whole subject/object duality. "When the two minds are both stilled, there is neither form nor action." The note says: "The pure, original Buddha-mind (which all possess and which cannot be sullied) and the mind which is part of the great illusion of Self." I'm not so sure about that because the text speaks of the two minds being both stilled, and what is the significance of speaking of the pure, original Buddha-mind being stilled? It seems nonsensical. So what are these two minds?

Teresa : Are they anything to do with the division into the

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(ctd) : store consciousness and (seed's)?

S . That would amount to much the same thing. "Desire springs from your thoughts. Thought springs from discernment (of matter). When the two minds are both stilled, there is neither form nor action."

: Could it be the subject and the object?

S . You could think of a subject consciousness and an object consciousness, I suppose.

Is it both reactive and creative?

S : Well, those terms aren't traditional ones, so it couldn't be those. It could be the 'sense-consciousness mind and the mind-consciousness or idea-consciousness mind. It could be that. It isn't really very clear. But the note doesn't seem really to make sense. "When the two minds are both stilled, there is neither form nor action." Presumably, then, one mind relates to form and one to action. Hm?

: You'd get into difficulties trying to think of all that complication in a very urgent 'situation.

S : Well, perhaps it's best to remember the image, the metaphor. Just remember that you're 'straw and that you have to keep a sharp lookout for fire. Not get' too near. Unless you can be sure that you're sufficiently damp to be able to do so. But I think the 'sort of extreme asceticism or extreme self-mortification that the text refers to is very unlikely to be practised by anybody in any form nowadays. It isn't really a very real kind of possibility for us. People don't go about mutilating themselves in order to reduce their craving. They're more likely to devise an extra or~an~ in fact!

St~9~~~~: Actually I did see, it sounds crazy - my mother gave me a cutting of 'something that actually happened, out of a newspaper, somebody had actually done this.

Done what?

Somebody had actually cut off their penis and thrown it into the fire to avoid temptation. It was a Christian.

S . Ah, we'll, there you are! Because there is a passage in the Bible, "the New Testament, where Christ speaks of making oneself an eunuch for the kingdom of heaven. E.O.v~ ~ But can one think of this 'sort of principle in more general terms? Let us say as a sort of general attitude towards one's body, temptation etc? Is there still any lesson for us in this 'section? Or does it refer to situations which one is quite unlikely to encounter?

: Yes, I think to me it says something about integration. It is sort of fighting yourself really.

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S . But it is fighting yourself in a very extreme way.

: Because you don't have to physically cut off your organs, but you can do it mentally, cut yourself off from that.

S : Yes. But how does that happen? Can you give me an example? Here one is, as it were, mutilating oneself in order to avoid an unskilful action. Not realising that the root of the unskilful action is in the mind and it is the mind that has to be tackled, the mind that has to be changed. It's the mind that has to be transformed. So is there any more general way in which we fail to recognise that fact? Fail to acknowledge that principle?

There could be the situation where you just withdraw from something that you feel is unskilful and just, kind of, live in isolation from it, doing nothing about it, so you don't even come into contact with it.

S . Yes, right. Well, what about this sort of psychological we might say in this case, psychological castration- that Punyavati mentioned? Can we think

of that in more general terms? Does it correspond to anything?

: You're not allowing yourself to experience yourself fully.

S : But that is a little different because it's a's though, in the case the Buddha refers to, you inhibit the possibility of acting on itself in order to avoid the risk of committing an unskillful action. You make it impossible for yourself to commit an action at all. Do you see what I mean? In other words, you're so afraid of making a mistake, you don't do anything at all. This seems to be the general attitude. In other words, you won't take risks, and because there's no possibility of your doing what is unskillful, there's no possibility in such a situation, presumably, of your doing anything skillful either. You're so anxious to avoid doing wrong that you put yourself in a position of not being able to do right either. So do you think this sort of thing happens? You retreat into a sort of grey neutrality. You're so afraid of being bad, you lose the capacity to be good. Does this sort of thing happen, do you think?

: It's almost, on a very mundane level, like not speaking out in a group because you're afraid you'll

say the wrong thing.

S : Yes, if you're not careful, you lose the ability to speak at all.

: Or you have a duality of character, one very exaggeratedly opposite to the other.

: We're so often frightened of getting attached to people in a relationship...

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S . Yes, that's right and you don't make friends at all. Yes, yes. Well, no doubt there is the danger of attachment, but if you're so afraid of danger that you don't go near people at all, well, you lose the possibility of making friends, you lose the capacity to make friends. There seem to be quite a few sections dealing with desire, neurotic desire, craving in various forms, So clearly, if not the Buddha, certainly the compilers of this sutra considered the subject quite important. Let's go on. There's another saying on the same subject. We will be getting on to something different shortly. Who would like to read 32?

"The Buddha said: 'The sorrows of men come from their longings and desires. Fear comes from these sorrows. If freedom from desire is attained, what (cause for) grief and fear will remain?'"

S : This section introduces a slightly, somewhat new topic. What topic

is that?

Fear.

S . Fear! Yes! "The sorrows of men come from their longings and desire's" That is to say, their neurotic longing's and desires. That we've dealt with perhaps sufficiently. "Fear comes from these 'sorrows': Do you think it is that fear c'o'mes from these sorrows? Or that fear comes along with the sorrows? That fear comes in fact from the neurotic longing's and desires?

: Ye's. S . Would you not rather say that?

: That's part of the sort of craving, isn't it? You're ~~~ of not being able to have it.

S : Or afraid of losing it. Do you think fear is a very common thing?

~Qcj Ye's, Yes. S What sort of fear? fear of what? Or fear for what?
It's fear for yourself () I 'suppose. Fear of pain. S
. Fear of pain, yes. Either physical or mental.

Ko~j . What about irrational fear~1because it seems sometimes fear can just be this fear and you can't connect it with something that's either physical or mental. More existential fear.

S : Well, there's also what they sometime's call floating anxiety. People are always anxious, but not anxious about anything in particular. In a state of vague, indeterminate anxiety. I think this is quite wide-

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~orlc &r~ v~~tA~y ~X:O(4S. S(ctd) : spread, isn't it? At least in a very diluted form. 6
Sdmehting~s going to happen.

Well, it usually does! S One might say that's no reason for feeling anxious.

People worry about not having 'something to worry about.

And the fear of losing control.

S : Yes~ And what is that all about? The fear of losing control. Do you mean of oneself, or other people or both? Perhaps they are closely connected. Perhaps you are afraid of losing control of others because of your fear of losing control of yourself. To see somebody else out of control perhaps weakens one's own controls.

It's fear of losing control of what you think is

yourself ()

: And not ready to admit bits you don't like.

S . Is this fear of losing control at all widespread, do you think?, Do many people suffer from this? What is it all about?

: Well, it's like I've experienced fear of letting myself go.

S . But what is the dreadful thing that might happen if ~ou do?

\(O~~~S : Change. S . Is it as simple as that? \(\oic~~ : Sort of irrational. People might think you're 'silly.

S . Well, you might be, ye's. Are you afraid you might commit an act of violence?

: It's sort of, like, almost the way you see things just breaks down~ and 'so there's a fear.

: It's like a part of yourself that you don't want to admit to people and you're afraid they might see that.

~i3~ : Think you're less of a person. : It's inferiority. S : Pardon? : Sort of feeling yourself inferior () Someone might take you and lock you away!

S : You think it's usually some unskilful or even bad aspect of yourself that you re afraid might break loose

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S(ctd) : like a tiger from a cage.

Yes.

: But certainly~its~mething that's died down in me a hell of a lot since I've met the Friends, because I remember someone said it's a bit like coming in c~ntact with your own madness, whereas I think tLhat all of us are much more happy with that concept whereas in the wider community to be-mad is...

S : I can't say I've noticed much madness in the FWBO! They seem to be a restrained and reasonable lot!

Well, Bhante, it's probably because we accept those parts in ou~5elve's~ whereas...

S . I'm only joking. Good. S . I do-n't think anybody's really mad. What, you mean generally?

S : No, I mean, even using the word quite metaphorically, within the Friends. I don't think... People may be letting themselves go a bit, but it isn't a's though there's a repressed madness lurking under the surface! I don't really get that impression from anybody.

It 'seems with me, to me that the part I feel I'm in control of is0 more rational one's and also generally accepted by other people and by friends, society or whereve v~ronment I live with it. And I feel by lettin~~SgLo, ~ould be, maybe emotions or energies which I have unlo~ked, which are unknown to me. And I don't understand them and it's more like the fear of the unknown, not really knowing what it is I'm afraid of, not being able to understand it.

S . Yes, it's thejpart of oneself3 one doesn't> be~ore one unleashes it, really know whether it's good or bad, 'skilful or unskilful.

Yes.

S : It might be either. It might be a tiger or it might be a nice domesticated cat,!

I often feel that if I do let myself go I really do need the Dharma. It will keep me sane.

S : I 'have sometimes wondered why quite a lot of women in the Movement, they like the idea or the figure of the dakini, especially the one which is 'sort of dancing, naked! Quite a lot of women 'seem to identify rather 'strongly w-ith this figure. So I've sometimes wo~d~red, well, why is that? They seem to identify with this rather than with the peaceful figure of Tara, seated there serenely and (possessed?). No, they like this half-mad dakini 4"~~rc~ especially with her hair sort of streaming out. Seems to ring

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S(ctd) : ~uite a bell, doesn't it? So a lot of women therefore must feel there's a certain kind of energy 'sort of locked up within them that doesn't get much of an opportun-ity to express itself. Well, there!,s a corresponding male figure, the heru~a, but it's only in ,Glasgow that. '(loud laughter) Do you see what I mean? Elsewhere in the Movement it doesn't seem to have excited any interest at all.

~Iso s~~~~~: This reminds meL of what we were saying about people operating in 'segment's. Because if you spend a lot of your time being a certain aspect of yourself then there's always the chance that you'll forget which aspect you're supposed to be and you'll start being another one. And that can make you feel anxious. ~o~ ~OW) playing a role or~social part.

S : Yes, not knowing which persona is appropriate to the occasion. CMy God! I've got the wrong t~~s~ ~~)I' () dust it down. Yo~ may perhaps have change~ mask's several times in the course of a day. I 'should know all about it. I wrote a poem about this once. You know the sort of thing - "Excuse me, your mask's 5lipping~~~ Sometime's you do see people's masks slip. I've mentioned this. I've written about this in my memoirs in one

place. Do you remember? In connection with that old Bengali hypocrite that I was associated with in my early days. Talking to him it was as though, in a certain situation which I wrote about, it ~a~m~ time to time, his affable sort of mask slipped and you saw something else underneath; he'd hastily sort of.... Sometimes we do have this experience. You may even have the experience of your own mask slipping. So you..

That happens in communication exercises sometime's.

S : Ah, yes! () you can feel that certain things (

Very odd experience when that happens~ actually. It sometimes happens to me when I'm talking to people, suddenly I realise something's totally changed, the way I sort of feel. Very disconcerting.

T.~cba : If there's this sort of animal inside~ 'co's

I feel.

S : You've picked up on that I : Yes, I feel a lot.

S : It might have been anything else. It might have been a beautiful bird coming up, but anyway.

I feel lots of tiger's. And it feels a quite sort of basic energy. There's other things too, but that feels sort of very powerful.

S : You empathise with the tiger.

S(ctd) : So perhaps a lot of fears go back to this fear of loss of control. Some people seem almost to fear that if they lose control they might sort of go berserk and sort of smash up the place, hm?

: Is that the result of the fear of it? Because if it was ~ust the energy that you experience then you..

S : Oh, it can get you () 'sheer frustration, anger, resentment. Thoroughly fed up with the particular 'situation or particular people. Just wanting to smash it up. You know that urge just comes out sometimes uncontrollably. It's not just a question of mask slipping, it's sort of thrown aside!

: But it's quite blind, isn't it?

S : Well, is it? Very often it knows exactly what it is doing and it's very pleased to be doing it! Sometimes I think it isn't blind at all. That would be the mask speaking: "Well, it's blind," but very often the urge isn't blind. That tiger isn't blind. He knows what he wants to do. And he does it.

It's interesting bringing in the thing of the Dakinis. Because in a way like letting everything loose. . to me what she represents is just letting everything loose. So there's also an urge to sort of hang loose and to let everything go and to..

S : Yes, but loose is the opposite of tight, so that means you normally hold everything tight, bound, restricted etc. etc. And the dakini, you know, represents the opposite of that.

And it's like 'the fear interpose's between the two, yes? It's like the fear is the, I suppose it's hanging on to sort of being the same and not just letting go and 'seeing what happens.

S . It's interesting also that the women's magazine was called 'Dakini'. It had a little logo of a dakini, didn't it? I'm afraid 'Dakini' seems to have disappeared. We don't know where she's gone.

,~Find her.

S T hear she's going to be invited back!

: I suppose the idea is just to be in touch with that energy and therefore be able to use it, rather than be the 'servant of it.

S : I think it probably tends to be destructive only because it has been so inhibited. Perhaps in itself it 'isn't destructive. It's the repression, so to speak, which gives it its 'savage quality.

: That reminds me of Blake saying: "One law for the lion and the ox and the ()". Keeping it down.

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S : Well I think Blake was saying rather more than that. He was protesting against pseudo-egalitarianism. But he had 'similar sayings. He said, for instance: "Better murder an infant in the cradle than nurse unacted desires ~~~1qCuiea strong saying. I mean he wasn't saying if you feel like doing something unskilful, go ahead and do it. He wasn't really saying that. He didn't think of desire in those 'sort of negative terms. But unacted desires can, as it were, turn nasty, even though they might have been in themselves quite positive originally. So the Buddha 'says: "The sorrows of men come from their longings and desires". Well, if one is referring to neurotic longings and neurotic desires, that is literally true. But one could say: "The sorrow's of men come from their longings and desires", if those desires are positive-and desire itself is a positive term1 or can be a positive term-when they are suppressed. Do you see what I mean?

Maybe one is treading on slightly dangerous or at least controversial ground. But one doesn't want to take just a negative view of the spiritual life, so to speak. Do you see what I'm getting at?

: Yes

A(~a(: I think it is more helpful with our Christian conditioning to look at that sentence in a positive way.

S . Yes, yes,

St~ki~It: One could also look at it, though, as being part of the cyclical existence. Longings and desires cause becoming and grasping and so on. And that keeps you on the wheel of life and so you continue to have pain and suffering.

S . Yes, yes. This is in the case of neurotic desires. Ye's. S :
Yes.

"The Buddha said: "Those who follow the Way are like one who has to fight ten thousand and who, putting on his armour, steps out of the gate. His thoughts may be timorous and his resolution weak, or he may (even) get halfway to the battle-ground and then turn round and flee. Again, he may join battle and be slain. On the other hand, he may gain the victory and return. The Sramana who studies the Way must have a resolute mind and zealously build up his courage, fearing nothing that lies before him and destroying all the demon's (of temptation that stand in his way), that he may obtain the fruit (of diligently studying) the Way."

S : Mm. We come out to something a bit different now, don't we? A bit more positive, one might say. "The Buddha said: 1, Those who follow the way are like

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S(ctd) : one who has to fight ten thousand and who, putting on his armour, steps out of the gate.'" What sort of ideal is this? Or what form of the ideal is this?

Heroic.

S : Heroic. Ye's! "His thoughts may be timorous and his resolution weak, or he may (even) get half-way to the battle-ground and then turn round and flee. Again, he may join battle and be slain. On the other hand, he may gain the victory and return. The Sramana who studies the Way must have a resolute mind and zealously build up his courage, fearing nothing that lies before him and destroying all the demon's (of temptation that stand in his way), that he may obtain the fruit (of diligently studying) the way.~1t This rather reminds one of a well-known passage in the Pali Canon where the Buddha addresses his disciples, saying: "You are all Kshatri's, you are all warriors. And for what are you fighting? You are fighting for 'sila', you are fighting for 'samadhi', you are fighting for 'prajna', you are fighting for 'vimutti'". So this is a very inspiring sort of emphasis. But it does raise a question. It does raise a point. That is to say, is it as easy, do you think, for women to think in terms of being

heroines, as for men, ideally at least, in theory at least, to think in terms of being heroes?

Yoi~cs : Oh, yes. Yes. S . You do?

Yes.

Definitely.

S : But does it take the same sort of form or does it take a different form? Is that how you feel? Sallying forth, putting on your armour, fighting your foes?

Yes.

Occasionally. S : Occasionally!

What you said before, a few study groups ago, about developing artfulness and guile, I think that comes into it.

S : Mm. Ye's, yes. You can't always be...

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S : The warrior is not a foolhardy person. He is crafty, especially if he is an old warrior! He may be quite brave, he may be quite courageous and willing to fight, but what he really wants is to win. He doesn't want to make a show of winning, he wants really to win. So a certain amount of craft and guile may be necessary. But, I mean do you think women are inspired by the sort of Joan-of-Arc-like figure?

: Boadicea.

S : Boadicea. With her two daughters and those great blades on either side of her chariot wheels. Yes.

: Love it! No. S : No. Or do you think it's.... : It used to be more 'so, but not so much any more.

S . Do you think it has anything in common with the dakini figure? Of course, in the case of the dakini there's a somewhat different emphasis. It's more like a spontaneous release, freedom. She's not fighting anybody, overcoming anybody, whereas in the case of the heroine, she's overcoming.

: I think that feeling of freedom, of the 'space is very inspiring.

What~ with the dakini ?

: Yes. Or generally. I mean Blake has that~ too.

It seems to me to be, if there's 'something distinct that needs to be overcome, then I can adopt an attitude of actually going out and trying to conquer it in that 'sort of way. But to keep that effort up over a long period of time is more difficult, 'cos it's like there's got to be definite sort of things for me to respond in that way.

S . Perhaps there always are, at least subjectively, because the text does speak of destroying all the demon's, hm? Or L'he Maras, and they're always there, presumably, hm?

: Even boredom and repetitive jobs~

S . Ye's.

: can be demons.

S : Boredom is a terribly dangerous demon. Very difficult to overcome. Yes.

: I guess our problem is that we've been conditioned very heavily into being more passive. Therefore the effort to really keep that energy going is a bit more of a push.

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Ah, I find that I really connect with it. I mean it's definitely.

S : With the heroic ideal? Definitely.

It's there, but it's just somehow... I don't think for men I suspect it's a bit more O.K. than it is for us somehow.

That's what I feel. That's what I really want to be doing. I really want to be sort of conquering things, overcoming things and sort of () challenging situation.

S . Psychologically and spiritually of course, that is always possible. But what about externally? You've got to overcome external obstacles, as it were, if any.

Like? Give an example.

S : Well, for instance, when you're building a new centre. As they did, say, at Sukhavati, knocking down walls and building up new ones. All the rest of it. Overcoming all the obstacles involved, including shortage of money, 'shortage of people, shortage of labour. Do you 'see what I mean? Or like the Order Members are doing in India. In fact what they're doing is really heroic.

That's the sort of thing that should really set you up, 'surely? To really challenge you and really spur you on.

: But you have to have that 'support, don't you, in that situation? 'Co's if, say, Padmasuri was there on her own she wouldn't have any other...

S : But does a real hero or heroine need that? Do they feel that way? Isn't that part of being a hero or heroine, that you do go forth on your own- and you do fight on your own if necessary? Yes? The words are: "Those who follow the Way are like one who has to fight ten thousand and who, putting on his armour, 'steps out of the gate" Xe steps out of the gate, out of the secure situation.

Oh, right!

S : Cutting off his retreat. He really puts himself on the line. So if you're not prepared to do that or don't think in those terms, you're not a hero or a heroine. Do you 'see what I mean? So that, supposing you are only one; well, I was only one once as far as the FWBO is concerned. And there are other people who are out on their own here and there, or just a very small number of them together.

: It depends very much on the motive as well and how determined you are, actually, () strength.

30~

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S . And also in that the pioneer is a heroic figure. I've been saying lately I think the women in the FWBO should be doing more pioneering: And I was especially thinking of women Order Members.

What sort of pioneering?

S : Well, especially in the way of going out and 'starting up new centres, communities, in new areas. At least new communities. We've got quite a lot of woman-power in the Movement.

: When I think of this heroine side, for me it's - it makes such a big image. Seems a bit too much: (It's confusing?). But for me it's more taking it bit by bit and sort of do what-ever you can.

// Vo~t: ~faif~: //S: S : The worm image!~ I spoke about that in an earlier lecture: Just burrowing away underneath, undermining the existing structure: That appeals to some people. Well, if you can't be a hero or heroine, at least be a busy little worm! For some people this worm image might be really inspiring. Really getting on with it. Undermining with a certain 'sense of 'secret glee and satisfaction!

(end of side one)

~res~ : really take that thing1 and see it through: I think that's part of being that ideal.

S : Yes: Because the Buddha 'says: "Those who fo~low the Way are like one who ha's to fight ten thousand and who, putting on his armour, steps out of the gate: His thought's may be timorous and his resolution weak~, "or~~ he may (e-ven) get halfway to the battle-ground and then turn round and flee.1' It's no use making a great show of putting on your armour and waving your 'sword, out from the gate you go and you get halfway there and you say to y~urself: "Right!" ~here~ 5 no use being that sort of a heto or heroine. And then: "Again he may join battle and be slain:U That's no good either, really, because yout aim is to win and survive. "On the other hand he may gain the victory and return.~ That's what you're really after.

: With the same analogy, the best way is to sort of trot out and suss out how the land lies and get it all sorted out and hen.

S : Or just sit safely within your fortress, press a little button and blow it all up!

~ri~4' : None of this chopping off arms stuff, it doesn't do any good at all.

() subterranean hideout. and they did it for you, pressed the button.

S : What do you think of this heroic image of the spiritual

life? Is it really inspiring? Is it really helpful, do you think?

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At time's, ye's. S : At times: I think it is:

I don't think one can function like that all the time

because of one's (f3':~at~t'~~~~.):

: And ~Iso ~he need for consolidation.

It seems like you need a patch of that and then a patch of just letting it settle in.

: Yes. Absorbing what's gone on. () inspiri~g.

S : But wh~t sort of sustained mental attitude is characteristic of the hero? Whether he's actually engaged in battle or not.

: I think it's something to do with decisjon~aking. What you 'said about putting yourself on the line. You have to meet your crunch points, where you make a decision to do something, whatever it is - it might be a mistake but you have to make the decision and then

carry it out.

Determination to follow it through.

S . This is why it goes on to say "The Sramana who studies the Way must have a re~o~l~u~t~i~o~n~ zealously build up his courage, fearing nothing that lies before him and destroying all the demons", hm?

('success?)

S : Yes. With confidence in oneself, confidence that victory is possible. Heroism doesn't necessarily involve all this sword-waving and flag-waving all that kind of thing. It certainly involves resoluteness and zealously building up one's courage and not fearing whatever lies before. Destroying opposition, whether internal or external. That sort of attitude is always a question of 'virya'. It is 'virya' at every stage of the 'spiritual life.

There's also, I think, a 'sort of pain in it sometimes... S .
Sometimes, yes. realising that things are SQ: 'L~t~~S

S : That time is 'short. That you have to do something within a certain period or, well, you just can't do it at all. A sense of urgency.

C~r~%~'~~~: I sometimes get a little bit confused between destroying one's demons, which is something one has to do, and also integrating various aspects of oneself.

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S : Well, it's really the 'same thing: You destroy them as demons. You don't destroy them as energies. destroy ~~~ is IcA"s to ~- integrate them. You destroy them as something separate and inimical and standing 'out~there' opposing you. You integrate them as energy~a~

Padmasambhava.

S . Yes. He's the classic example. How do you feel about this image of Padma'sambhava? Do you find it inspiring? : Yes~

S : Well, you all seem to have been hiding your light under a bushel for a long time! I'd expect you all to be up and doing quite 'soon!

: I think of fear as a demon. What does fear turn into? What's the energy that's involved with fear?

S . Oh, that's quite a question. One could say that fear is transformed into

courage, but that's too general.

Doe's fear correspond to anything positive?

: I was wondering. S : It is an energy. : Our whole being
is usually pretty well activated. Or paralysed. Or paralysed, frozen.
Well, yes. I was wondering if it'd be like the hero...

S : Perhaps fear is transformed into anger. Using anger in a positive
sense.

That breaks through.

S . Because when you're afraid ofte~ the adrenalin is flowing, because
you're getting ready to run away. But in the case of courage,
instead of running away, you run forward to meet the enemy. Well, it's the
'same adrenalin presumably.

I think it's heightened awareness too. S : Yes, yes, there's that too.
: I was going to say, actually you can really stop. S : You're very keJed
up, very tense, very concentrated. Well, that's~~~drenalin again, isn't it? You're poised ~
ready to run.

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: I was wondering if it turned into 'virys' or what.

S : In the case of fear you re poised to run away,~in the case of
heroism you're poised to run and meet the enemy. And sometime's you don't know
until the last minute which direction you lre going to go in. It's part of the
being keyed up:

: The (one?) thing I've found very inspiring is really looking at receptivity and realising
that it wasn't -passive and there was really a very active element in it: -

5~Ioca~~ : Might it be a theory -that it's to run away? I mean how do you know that

S : Well, somet-imes people do run away, don't they? In a literal
sense~ out of fear of death or whatever. I mean there is such a thing as a strategic
withdrawal, but there is also 'such 4thing a's actual, genuine, craven
running away. Whether literally or metaphorically.

: The heightened awareness that come's from fear might be 'so that one could take in all
the circumstance's and do something necessary, like climb a tree or something. Ye's, I
suppose that would be running away, but...

S . Well, there are certain circumstances in which it is wise to run away.

I mean other people may call it ~cowardice, but you know it's the wisest thing to do in the circumstances. He who... what is it?

Fights and runs away...

S : ..runs away, lives to fight another day. But it doesn't - look very heroic!

But it does 'seem sensible.

Wouldn't you say that fear was rie~tral? That it didn't imply that you were going to run away or you were going to fight, it was just a state which arose when you were in danger?

S : A state of readiness? This is true, I think, in a sort of animal, biological sense. I think 'sometiines with animal's, the manifestations of fear are quite similar to the manifestations of anger. As when the hair rises, the fur rises on the back. The animal snarls. Sometimes it~s difficult to tell whether t~is animal is angry or afraid. Whether it's going to bite you, or whether it's going to run away. It's ready for some- thing, but it's not quite able to judge the situation, perhaps.

: It's even called the 'fight or flight' ye~~t~o~. -

I mostly connect heroism with something like B-oadicea, something like that. But recently I was wondering if there wasn't heroi's~ involved with patience. Being patient as well as...

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S . I 'suppose it depends how you define heroism, hm?

Perhaps you mean knowing when to act and when not to act. Is that what you mean?

: Yes, because sometimes, I mean it's just - ea'sy~to 'sort of rush in and do 'something and the chances it's actually going to work might be quite small.

S : Well, there~s a difference, one might 'say, between heroism and foolhardiness. But perhaps one should be careful not to sort of qualify heroism in such a way as to depri'e -it of it's most characteristic features. I mean it represents a particular kind of virtue. I mean that which does sort of literally even sally forth and face the enemy. Without there being any implication of, as I have said, foolhardiness, anything like that. There is that open sort of quality about heroism. And patience may involve a number of positive features like strength and so on, but perhaps it's sort of confusing terms to speak of that also as heroism. Do you see what I mean? Even though it has a very positive, even strong quality.

: I'd sort of think of it more like guer~lla tactics rather than all out-onslaught.

S : Well, sometimes guenillas sally forth even, when they see their opportunity.

: I think an element of heroism is that it also has an effect on other people who see that act, isn't it? It's inspiring for other people. You give them courage.

S : Yes. It's inspiring.

: What about women having male hero figures? S . Having? °
Male hero figures. S . Male hero figures. ° Mm.

S . Well, never having been in that position - what do you all think?

: Or vice-versa. Men having female hero figures?

S ° What do you all think?

7~r~s~ : I find I need women. I find that I need to see it as a woman. To connect with it.

S : As a sort of reassurance that women can in fact be heroic?

: Yes. It feels wrong to put a man there.

: I know some people have reservations about having, well, women have reservations, about having men as hero

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(ctd) : figures. I was brought up on lots of 'stories about women and -the heroines.

S . But there's the Rani of (Jhantsi?)! Yes, but there's lots of Rajput women. S : Laxmibhai. Men also find these women inspiring.

&navet; : I also find I have a few male figures, very heroic, really inspire me. Alexander ha's always been my hero. And Parsifal, I find him very inspiring. And I do find a few figure's like that. j\l6t~'ta~I want to find myself wearing armour and fighting, like Parsifal does,html can relate to that energy, that emotional drive. Those qualities. But I just wondered if sometimes maybe you can actually project or, I don't know,~ge~ complicated.

S . Well, does it feel complicated? ° No. S :
(Then maybe it's acceptable?)

The qualities can be either male or female, can't they? Those kind of qualities that are transcendent.

° I think I always thought heroism was a purity of ideals and a 'sort of purpose. Looking at King Arthur or the Knights of the Round Table really...

S : There were in the Arthurian cycle one or two instances of women knights, weren't there? There was Britomart and there was another one, what was her name? Britomart comes in Spenser's "Faerie Queen". But there's also a female knight in "Orlando Furioso". In fact I think there are two. But it is in that context rather exceptional. Who are the inspiring heroines in history, would you say? I mean apart from Boadicea and Joan of Arc. Who are the others?

&1/4w~ani of Jhant'si (1~

You'll have to tell them about her. They've never heard of her.

: The lighthouse keeper's daughter who rowed out and... S . ~Grace Darling. Yes. : What about Florence Nightingale? Doesn't 'she qualify?

: I found the "Diary of Anne Frank" very... that was quite moving.

S : She wasn't quite a heroine in that 'sense, was she?

George Eliot?

S of 42 5 33 D8 T1 21 S : Because among the men it's become quite common.

: We do it on women's Order weekends but we haven't on Mitra events.

-. We were thinking of doing it C)

S : That's a good self-introduction, isn't it? You learn -a lot about C)! tWell, I never! Well, well, well!" You really do learn things about people. Sometimes things you really never suspected.

: Yes, it does definitely open you up to looking in a different way.

S : Something in Tuscany, in the different discussion group's, people told their life 'stories. But one of the most interesting things that came out was 'some people's childhoods, e'special~ their 'school life. In 'some cases their school lives were horrific. So h~ving heard

all that you understood the particular person better. That they'd gone through that, it was behind them. It was still having some effect on them, they were~still conscious of it to some extent. And in some cases, the case of these who are still quite young, it all happened not very many year's ago. So that enables one to understand people quite a bit better~ I think, Then if you're truly receptive to what -they have to say, don't just take it as an evening's entertainment, take it as a genuine 'sort of self- revelation, you do understand that person better and you can empathise with them more. Maybe forgive them more in some cases, when you hear just what they've been through. And still they've 'survived it and come up pretty bright and positive, notwithstanding. So you may develop more of an admiration for them. Just see what they've come through and what they've done in the way of working on themselves. Despite quite a lot of difficulties and maybe a very unfavourable start in life. Yes, I wish more people generally within the Friends would write their o~ life toffie~ ~t~lr~~~~bcIl\n%uwti,, that a lot of them a~£~~~~rty, ve~ interesting. ~ think I've had a single female biography. Don't think so. I've had lot's of biographies of the men. I don't ° know whether any women have published their biographies, any women Order Members, in "Shabda". ;4~Lt~j1 ~O)t~C~ ~~~~~C

Dhamma inna was writing hers. S : Do you think women are a bit more reticent than men?

: Maybe e 'should get Vajra'suri to write hers. She's had a (

write a book.

C~VId : In this light I find it very inspiring to talk to older women as well, because their lives are so fascinating. ~t gives me a different perspective on my life.

S : It's said that younger women haven't got all that much to tell.

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: Oh, but the women around here do. S : When I say younger I mean those who are eighteen.

: Sometimes older women don't have that much to tell if they have had limited lives.

S : It depends how honest one is prepared to be. I mean, someone did once write that when one started writing one's autobiography, the first thing of which you became consc~ous was of all the things that you were not going to tell! Honesty isn't really easy. It may be easier within the context of the Friends, but it still isn't completely easy. There may be quite a few things that- one has unconscious reservation's about,yot£just put them aside, either with the rationalisation of: 'Ah well, that isn't

very important,' or 'people wouldn't understand' -or 'well no one is telling that'. So in a way I allow myself to let a presentation, even if ever so you're seeing yours slightly, 'sort of polishing it up a bit, not to say tarting it up a bit for public consumption. But 'still, I'm sure within the Friends a greater measure of honesty is possible.

Are you going to write your next volume soon?

S . Well, yes! That's still a long way off. Actwt~ are ~oncluded for the time being. I hope to get back strai~ht after this study retreat. I hope 'so. Not easy to sort of get back and bring so many hundreds of little threads all together again and carry on. I'm hoping to get back. I must admit I shan't be telling everything, because if I tried to tell everything, I shan't tell anything. There's so ~mtch to tell. There really is. This is what I felt about my trip to India. I've not written any- thing about my trip to India for 'Shabda'. I spoke a bit at the Centre, but that isn't anything at all, really. There's 'so much. One could really write a whole volume about this. Not only one's experiences and impressions, but one's reflection's and so on.

What about the first 4 chapters of your biography?

S . The publishers thought that they weren't very interesting and...

How could we get hold of them?

5~iOtah~ : The women would have been interested in that part. ~'a iov~ ~ ~aa j~.

S : Well, the men too. But I have them with me and I even shortened them quite a bit, hoping that they could be included. But even so, no) the publishers didn't want them. They said my early life wasn't as interesting as my later life. From their point of view they may well have been correct. I think the writing - improves as I go along. I think the early chapters are the least well written, frankly. But they do complete th~/picture~

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S(ctd) : So I hope that 'sometime I can ~'tt back all the bits I cut out and produce- them. In fact~ I hope that on some future occasion the FWBO will be able to bring out 'The Thousand-Petalled Lotus with those missing%' chapters as volume one, - nd what t'm writing now as volume two. This is what I'm hoping. Maybe ~~a~ awcpmmon title. So people will know a little bit more about me, hm? Say, ten chapter's-worth more. So maybe others could follow 'suit. I'm sure people have, well, just about everybody, led ver i~ teresting lives. I actually know very little about 0~h% women from that point of view. I know far more about the men. Either because they are more communicative or because I've been present when they've been communicative more often. There ar~ many men's biographies I haven't heard. I know they've given them, but I just wasn't present. But I must have-heard altogether about at least thirty men's biographies. I don't think I've heard any biography of any woman Order Member.

You were there when Anjali gave hers.

S : Oh, was I? Ah, that's right. Yes, I remember the bit about Cook Island, that's right, ye's. And her childhood. Ye's, I remember that, yes. I think that's the only one. S& ladies, seize your pen's, toss aside your inhibitions, give your dakini's a pen~&~supply of paper and let them write, shamelessly! I'm sure people will understand you much better. I do get chunks of autobiography in the letters that people write. I mean I've had very good letters from a lot of women in the Movement, especially those, if I may say so, in New Zealand. They seem to be especially good correspondent's. I think I myself could write a biography of several New~Zealand women Friends because they~'~c%mmunicated at such length~ in letters, in some cases over quite a long period. So I'm quite well informed about them, comparatively. But the women who are living m~c nearer~° in this country, in many cases IThS now nothing at all about. Certainly before they surfaced in the FWBO. I'd love Sulocana to write her -autobiography.

(general agreement)

S : I don't think she will, actually, but there we are.

: It would take too long. ~t~I~~o~ ~J'£~ Why on't you just sit in front of a tape recorder?

S : Yes.

: Someone else can help You~ too. They just keep asking the questions,

C~M~~din~questions7]~st kee~ ~t~ ~t~ ~c ~~~ r~~ret~~~.

Sulocana, the bit's that have been coming up in the study group rec~entj[y are~fascinati~g.

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S . The little glimpse's you give of your mother! fascinating'

: Ah well, there are some other people who knew her.

S . I really suspect there's a book lurking in Beryl. 'The Memoirs of a Norfolk Housewife'! I'm sure you could serialise it in one of the Sunday papers!

- : You'd be rich, Beryl!

S : Help build 2 women 5 retreat centre! As for Punyavati - 'A Tale of Two Continents~.

: Three! S . Three.

: There's Africa, India and England.

S : Anyway, that is all simply by way of exploration of the herois ideal. But to return to that topic, well, maybe women in the Movement should think much more seriously in these sort of genuinely heroic terms. It's not a question of making empty theatrical gestures, but of genuinely being more courageous, more resolute and more zealous - in every respect. Alright, let's go on. There's quite a big section coming now~ 0" ~o~~r ~o~, 'c

"One night a Sramana was intoning "The Sutra of the Teachings Bequeathed by Kasyapa Buddha." The sound of his voice was mournful, for he thought repentantly that he wished to renounce his vows. The Buddha asked him: "What did you do before you became a monk?" "I used to like playing the lute," he replied. "What happened," said the Buddha, "when you loosened the strings?" "They made no sound." "And when you pulled them taut?" "The sounds were brief." "And how was it when they were neither taut nor loose?" "Then all the sounds were normal," replied the Sramana. To this the Buddha said:~"It is the same with a Sramana studying the Way. If his mind is properly adjusted, he can attain to it, but if he forces himself towards it, his mind will become weary and, on account of the weariness of his mind, his thoughts will become irritable. With such irritable thoughts his action's will retrogress and with such retrogression, evil will enter his mind. But if he studies quietly and happily, he will not lose the Way."

S : So this section is based, so it would seem, on a very well known parable of the Pali Canon.

The story of Sona.

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S . The story of Sona, yes. And there the Buddha concludes by saying one must practise evenness of effort. Neither 'straining too much nor being lazy and s~ack. Evenness of effort.

<~i~~sk : Bhante, my memory of the parable i~ of "I used to play I the lute" rather than "I used to like playing the lute"

Is it

S . Pardon?

When I've heard it from the Canon, it was that "I play the luteT1 rather than "I...

S : Well, liked playin~, in the sense of 'I played' . In the sense of 'I was fond of playing1, yes? Which assumes that you actually play. Do you think this is true of people? That sometime's they over-exert and sometime's, by way of a reaction, they under-exert and then they get despondent. It's interesting that the Buddha could understand the monk's mind from the

tone of his voice. 'the sound of his voice was mournful, for he
thought repentantly that he wished to renounce his vows." Do you
think you can understand things like that from the tone of people's voices?

: Oh, yes, yes.

S : Have you ever had any experiences? Or in what sort - of
situation?

: Well, when we used to have an evening puja at Abi-rati you could always tell what
people had been doing during the day b~ ~k~ ~&LCSS Sort of, you could tell the sort of
tone.

S . Like what? In what sort of detail could you tell? Could you tell, for
~nstance, whether they '6 been working in the garden or going for a walk? Or
was it a question of mood? Whether they were in a happy

~kfO~ha : More mood, yes. I don't think, I mean you could guess. But I mean there were
time's when, well~ each one had different characteristic's. Sometimes they were out of tune
and other times it just went well and all together and other times it was sort of jangling a lot.

S . What was that place where we~had~'study retreats in Sussex,
years and year's ago? What was it called? Not Staines, something like that. Do
you remember? Where you....

: LYes. We had the 'Door of Liberation

S : That's right, yes. And 'Dhyana for Beginners'.

~~IQC~~ : Yes.

S : So what was that place? It was in. .

Outside Brighton.

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S . Not very far from Brighton. It was near HurstmQnc~U~ Anyway,
never mind what the name of the place was. I'm remembering that when we had
those seminars I was very concerned on 'several occasions about the quality of the
chanting. Do you remember that?

: Yes, we had quite a 'small room....

S : But I felt that the tone of the chanting was quite dredful.

: Harsh.

S : It was very, very harsh and v"ry false. I think some people were more responsible for this than others. I went into it at considerable length with people. I found it very difficult to change it. But I expressed it by saying that I had the impression that people were sort of pumping into the chanting a lot of black energy. That was exactly my impression. It was very unpleasant - at least I found it unpleasant. So I think that the way in which people chant in a community or at a centre or on a retreat can tell one quite a lot about those people. Or even about the community ar about the centre, about that particular group. At one time chanting, at least sporadically, in t40e~M~ovem~~ w s very~~a~ It's better now.

When ~a, a ~~~g,~~~~~flt~'si~p~y mean that it is ragged or too loud or too 's~~t . I mean that the sort of feeling quality of it isn't really positive.

You know what I'm talking about, ~~ ye~S. : You find that at the beginning of a retreat the chanting is quite soft and hesitant and wavering and then, as time goes on, it builds up and gets really strong. As people become more confident and more relaxed, the chanting grows stronger as well.

S . I've noticed on 'some of the women's retreats -I've only noticed it on a few, so I don't want to over-generalise- that at the beginning the chanting is a bit reedy, but at the end it's a little deeper, a little fuller~ Has anybody noticed that?

I sometimes find it's got a harsh sort of high quality to it sometime's at the beginning, where people aren't really sort of e~xpressing a depth of feeling towards what they're chanting. It's more like trying to get the words out and sort of fit in with other people and things like that. I'm quite sensitive in that way.

S : On the Tuscany course we devoted quite a lot of -- attention to chanting~ Correct chanting ~hSt 50 0"j even correct pronunciation of the Pali and Sanskrit words. All of those things ~re important. Some people, for instance, were chanting 'Om Ha Hum'. That had become quite common.

S : Om Ha Hum instead of Om Ah Hum.

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: The little 'm'" with the dot over it is an ~ng~ sound? S : Ye's, it's nasal-like, yes.

: I always notice the difference going back to Glasgow, the centre there - Maybe it~'s unfair, because it's always after being on a retreat. But I'm always a bit disappointed. And it's mainly men there who are chanting.

You do build up something on a retreat, don't you? I notice quite a difference when I go back a's well, but I think that's more....

S : But then in a centre or community, one should keep up ~ high 'standard of chanting. But that mean's you must chant together regularly. That at least is necessary. And that suggests regular meditations and pujas and so on. If you just chant once in a way, well,, your chanting, when you~do get together, is not going to be particularly good. ~t was useful in Tuscan~y to have the same people chanting to'gether several time's a day, every day, for three month's. So they could get in some practice. But in your community, if you're living in a community, well, you should have that 'sort of experience day after day, not just for three months, maybe in some cases for three year's. Think how good your chanting should be, hm? And if you live on your own, chant on your own. No reason why you shouldn't. You can certainly improve your chanting, chanting 6n your own. You can also hear yourself more distinctly. The sound of your chanting is not drowned by the sound of other people chanting. So sort of let it rip. - - Open up. Chant loud and clear. Not an apologetic little mumble.

: But only when the neighbours can't hear you!

S : If they can hear your chanting, you can probably hear their radio or TV. So tit for tat, you are giving them better than you got! If you re expected to put up with whatever they have on the radio or whatever they sing in the bath, well, can't they put up with your chanting of the ~uja? It 'might be a good talking point over the garden fence. "What is it that we hear you singing, Mrs. So-a~d- So?" You can 'say: "Ah, but I'm a Buddhist. That's my morning chant"! ~And then they 'say:"That"s . " I very interesting

As long as they don't assume that you are practising black magic.

: I have priests living near...

S : Anyway, any fua~her point~ about this, this.. what shall we call it? This sort of, well, Middle Way.

Kot~ : I think it's a really good passage. Really show's the Buddha's compassion.

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S : Right. And you can see that if you do force yourself, you over-exert, you make a

wilful sort of effort, you can have a very serious reaction. As he seems to have had. And you can really go off the path, so to speak.

: Maybe this could be related to heroism. It's not really inner heroism, but external heroism.

S . It's pseudo-heroism. You're pushing yourself in an unnatural sort of way. Heroism must be real heroism. I mean, here you are, 'sort of brandishing that sword, when it's really too heavy for you to lift.

You ought to find a more appropriate weapon.

: Just one thing about the chanting, to come back to chanting: - how much of an effect does th-e

leader have on the chanting, by leading the chanting?

S : I think he has quite a big effect, or she ha's quite a big effect. So I think the leader must, 'so to speak, be chosen carefully. I mean if the leader's chanting isn't sufficiently good, it must be pointed out. That's again another thing we did in Tuscany, everybody had the opportunity of leading on 'seve~ral occasion's. Some Mitra's, we found~ had led pujas frequently before, especially those who were living at Padmaloka. Others had never led a puja before. So I think it is important that Mitra's also, including the women mitras, should get an opportunity on retreats and so on, of leading pujas. It shouldn't be that when you find yourself an Order Member, w,elb then you lead a puja and it's the first time ,you ve ever done it. That 'should not happen.~~tras 'should have an opportunity of leading puja's and so on. Certainly well before they are - ordained. At least in their own communities. There may be the sort of~erson who hangs back, who lets others always lead, but no, they must- be encouraged to take their turn in leading.

: ()?

S : Because it occur~d during the Convention. Some people raise this question of whether you should follow the leader, and ye's, you certainly 'should. You have a leader, not because you don't know the chant you know it as well as he does, perhaps, but you have a leader to unify you, So that you're all chanting at the same pace. Do you see what I mean? The same pitch. So you should listen very carefully to the leader and follow. Not be individualistic and insist on doing it in your own way.

EIYe : Just like a conductor.

S : The leader is like a conductor, yes. There's one particular person, I won't mention any names, who, at least, always used to prolong his chanting of the mantra way beyond anybody else. And you know that was quite disconcerting. So one 'shouldn't do that sort of thing. You 'should follo~ the leader. If the leader is chanting a bit fast, you chant a bit fast and vice-versa. If you

think quite objectively that he's doing it too fast,

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S(ctd) : don't 'sort of try and 'slow him down during the puja by dragging. Ju'st 'speak to him afterward's and 'say think you took that a bit - fast. But in the course of the puja it'self,' ju'st follow the leader. That's why you have a leader.

(end of tape)

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(end of tape)

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S(ctd):)make sure it is establishing what correct pronunciation is. Like this 'OM HA HUM ' business.

Sulocana Sometimes the word 'arahat' gets pronounced 'arabat' .

S : Well, you must point it out to people. We discovered in Tuscany some very curious mispronunciations that hopefully were all ironed out there. Alright, let's have a...

: Is it 'Bhagavata' or 'B ahagavata'?

S : 'Bhagavata' : It's an aspirated 'b' . Nor 'b' but 'bk'.

Trish : What do you do if you get a tone deaf person? What do you do with people

who are tone deaf?

S : Oh dear I think they have to be careful not to shout very loudly. Again this question of the sound of the voice. Even apart from the question of chanting in the puja, you can tell a lot from the sound, the tone. The quality of somebody's voice. Even if you don't understand the language in which they~speaking.

Eve : I notice that a lot working with animals, actually. That you can really quieten down, say, a very excited horse by just keeping a very soothing tone. The same with young children as well, if they are yelling and screaming - sometimes!

: On the telephone () of hearing your voice

S : This is another thing we touched on again in Tuscany, and that is the question of voice production. Quite a lot of people really don't speak up, and I'm sure that this has some sort of psychological significance. That you swallow your words in your throat or something like that. You don't really speak out, don't speak up, don't speak clearly, don't project your voice. Do you know what I mean?

A nnie : I noticed that a lot when Lokamitra sort of forced me to start teaching yoga. I was so nervous and I talked, would say things, and it sounded alright to me but people just couldn't hear and the quality might seem the same to me, but I think...

S : Well, one must consider the occasion; if you are speaking in a hall or a large room, well, you want everybody to hear you. You must be mindful of that, so you must speak up, as part of your effective communication with those people.

But another context in which we if discussed this question was that of the reading during - the puja. That reading is really an art. Some people are really very much better at it than others. But I think everybody could improve.

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S(ctd): So one should make a point of going over the reading beforehand. Sort of rehearsing it and maybe getting some one to listen to you,~ive you some positive, critical feedback, tell you whether you're too loud or too soft or whether you re taking it too fast. Otherwise if if there are few things more painful, as it were, in the context of a puja than~bad reading. Someone reads like, 'One night a Sramana was intoning "the Sutra of the Teachings - Bequeathed by Kasyapa Buddha".. Readings almost like that and it s so bad that it strikes a jarring note. Do you see what I mean? And you must check all the Pali and Sanskrit

words beforehand, not stumble when you come to them. This is very important as contributing to the total success of the puja. And of course the reading must be well chosen, must be suitable to the occasion, should be inspiring.

Trish : Sometimes I find with readings that, particularly if it's on a long retreat or something, the reading itself seems to take you over and that you're reading not directly from the eye as it were ()

S : Right. (I've noticed (?)) on retreats at least that very often people are scurrying around looking for a reading at the last minute just before the puja, and then have to catch hold of somebody with about two minutes' notice and ask them to read it. So how can there be a good reading under those sort of conditions? Whoever is in charge of the puja, whether the retreat organiser or the leader of the puja, should think in good time, have a reading ready, give the person that he or she asks to do the reading plenty of time to go through it, to go over it, to practise reading it. It's not fair to spring it on someone at the last minute. Do you see what I mean? I mean this happens so much that one of our Friends put together a little volume of puja readings, I don't know if you've seen it, just so that on retreats, well, at least you've got that to go through evening by evening. At least you've got a ready-made selection of readings. And sometimes even a retreat organiser forgets to take suitable books on retreat with them and there's a real search then for something to read during the puja. So thought must be put into things ~t~i~ kind.

Elsie : Once, if whenever we read some- thing or we find a passage that is inspiring we just copied it out and we sort of compiled it, so any time when we wanted to refer to it we just referred to what we compiled.

S : Also people must give thought to the nature of the reading. Sometimes it was quite clear on different retreats I've been on that whoever had selected the reading hadn't even read it himself and thought what it meant, because on a number of occasions, at least three or four that I remember, the reading selected was in fact another translation of the verses of the Sevenfold Puja itself, and the person making the selection of the reading hadn't realised that. So it means he hadn't read it very care- fully. Do you see what I mean? And don't forget the reading comes as part of the Entreaty and Supplication

section. You are, as(it were, asking the Buddha to turn the

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S(ctd) : wheel of the Dharma, so th~reading must be some teaching of the Buddha or some Enlightened personality like Milarepa: Not, let's say, a passage from Dr. Couze or someone's little poem. You're inviting the Buddha to turn the wheel of the Dharma. I'm not saying that~ on special occasions when you have a lot of readings, if you shouldn't have the odd little poem, but be careful where you put it. Otherwise you're inviting the Buddha to turn

the wheel of the Dharma and then the little poem~ 'My Dog'~by Mary Smith!

Well it's not quite like that, is it?

S : I know I'm exaggerating here for the sake of effect and to impress it more strongly on your minds, but/you know what I mean, don't you? Otherwise it can be an anti-climax. You are sitting and waiting for the Dharma and you just get somebody's nice ~~~nnocuous, little poem. That means you haven't really considered the meaning of those verses in the section of Entreaty and Supplication. You've just repeated them but they haven't really meant anything to you.

It's quite important as well that the person who's doing the reading actually understands, line by line, phrase by phrase what they're saying, because their understanding - if someone doesn't it can really ()

S : Indeed.

: Also, like,~they're quite unsympathetic~with all the things and I'm sometimes, (~xpect for a reason I really get q't~t~if cynical about t.

S . Or they're not in a proper mood to read, so they shouldn't do it then.

: fA5~ttr~~ reaching that stage~ you've just destroyed every- thing.

S . Right. Yes. I mean one can understand from th's Aow so to speak, a puja should be composed and put together. It isn't just a question of going through that same old routine and just getting anybody to do it.

or 'et~rttr~ ~7~~L5~ : I've actually refused to do readings~once or twice because I really haven't felt like it, and sometimes people have given me a really funny look () it's really important.

S . Well it can make things a bit difficult for the organiser if nqone wants to do anything that eveni;ng, they all just want to listen, but still you mustn't force yourself to do something if you're not in the

appropriate mental state or appropriate mood.

: X~ tkt ~aS~c ~M~&~ , there was a retreat in January that I was on and we were talking about it, and it still felt that , well, in fact it trans-

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t~ab (ctd) : pired1 in fact nobody did it any more, because there still seemed to be a block about saying: 'The Buddha was a man as we are men. and I think:::

S . Well~ then; one--' 5 got the alternative line to fall back on:

~rie~~ : ~Born~. S :LBorn% r-ttrtSa . So you're happy about us using..:

S : Well, yes: That's why I've supplied that alternative line:

: Ah: I was under the understanding that you didn't actually want us to use the word 'born' because..:

S : Well, it was I who devised that line as an alternative. Because I hea~d~~number of , as it were, unauthorised alternativesW~£in circulation: So I thought there'd better be one authorised alternative version. Do you see what I mean? So if for any reason people aren't happy with the standard version, well, just change that first line and fall back on: 'The Buddha was born as we are born.'

Ah. Right. S . That'll keep everybody happy. ~rfa : I've heard that that...

~otI . I was ~ustif ~ayin~ that I was on the retreat also and () i~ W~h' ~ that if

I thought you wanted everyone to say the same thing.

S . Well, yes. Everybody say the same. Not some people

saying one line and some people saying the other. : No. I if if meant; (

S . No. Well, everybodyif saying the same alternative line: that was the point. So there were only two versions altogether in circulation and not twenty. That was what - everybody should use the same alternat+vp line, if they don't want to say that original first line.

: Yes. I've heard that they use it ~com only in Australia and New Zealand. It's very commonb~ use it much more regularly than we do here in ~0~nd0uey~

S : Which one?

: 'The Buddha was born as we are born' It's commonly used there because of their

objections. I'll go ahead and say it: I don't have any problems! I don't care. It's just words.

S : No. Not just words. Words have a resonance apart from their literal meaning.

S of 42 5 34 D8 T2 3Z5 : Yt~\$h~y are important.

: Also, it's like, if we're on a retreat situation and it's all women and so that you'd have the puja and it's 'born', and~~~a~ few of those~n~y go to a centre and then it's men leading the puja saying: 'The Buddha was a man as we are men' that creates a bit of a - because it feels a bit like it's not the sincere.:

: It's jarring.

: It's a bit like it, is a concession somehow.

: It's not the real thing, you know, the real thing is: "The Buddha was a man as we are men, it's not set~ a ~r~atM-

S : Well it's always at the discretion, this is what I've also made clear, it's at the discretion of whoever is leading. Whether the retreat or the puja, it's up to them to judge the situation and decide accordingly. They have that freedom. Does anybody know the history of the basic puja?

: No.

S : I thought probably not. I mean how did it come into existence at all?

: The Bodhicarya? '10 S : &Oko, no. I'm afraid it was me! What happened was this. I was getting letters from Vajrabodhi in Helsinki, saying that some of their Friends there were not happy with the Sevenfold Puja this is how it all started. I don't know whether it's fair to say that the Finns are a bit literal-minded, you'll have to ask Vajrapushpa about this, but the main objection was that they said they were saying words that they were actually not doing. For instance they said that they weren't actually offering golden lotuses or jewelled, what is it? jewelled lamps. And it was therefore breaking the fourth precept to say that they were. Yes, this was the objection. So ensued quite a correspondence about this but it remained a difficulty, so Vajrabodhi asked me whether I could compose some verses for translation into Finnish which would take the place of the Sevenfold Puja for beginners. So I composed those verses, but they were composed for translation into Finnish and in Finnish there is no difference of gender as there is in English. Do you see what I mean? 1) Ve~LLS APi I

S' So I composed them for translation into Finnish, they were translated into Finnish and they've been used ever since. For the Finns, no difficulty, because no jewelled lamps, no ~oidLt, ~0~tA~~~~ and no questions of gender. So they were quite happy, but having composed this I thought, 'well, put it into circulation'. In fact some people suggested it may be useful in England and other countries too. So I thought, 'Alright, ~oI~~put it into

circulation.' But I realised that there might be this difficulty

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S(ctd) : about gender, therefore I put a footnote to say that if people find the first line inappropriate, then they may use this alternative version; and that was what was published in 'Shabda', and that was the original source.

: The original footnote was that 'man' meant, included, all men and women.

S : That's right. Yes. But that if this was unacceptable, then people could adopt that alternative line, which I myself supplied. So that's the history of the Basic Puja.

: You didn't ever consider just dropping that original line?

S : I don't like... I would have dropped it if I could have thought of an alternative line which really gave that meaning. But 'The Buddha was born as we were born' is a bit of a compromise. In ~ sense, one is just stressing that question of birth which is a bit, as it were, accidental. if One might have said; if if change it to 'The Buddha was a human being 5 we are human beings', but that changes the metre and thm completely. But it doesn't really wo~~~Sw~~~n you chant it. But if anybody, anyone with any literary gifts has got any suggestions, well, I'm quite open to that. But I couldn't personally do better than 'The Buddha was born as we are born' and I'm not really satisfied with that just from the English point of view.

: In Glasgow we've used a lot, 'The Buddha was human as we are human'. No. No, that ~ond,s S : it's only ~ Do a bit apologetic. As you say, '4j~ll~ humt~n~t you see what I mean? As though the Buddha has the same weaknesses that we have, and I don't like that suggestion. I did consider that. So 'born' is at least neutral~in that sort of way. It simply states a fact. But to 'The Buddha was human as we..' oh, if- if 'even the Buddha wasn't perfect~ so it isn't surprising that we're not perfect either? So it seems a bit apologetic, a bit weak. Anyway, how did we get o~to all this? Oh, yes, it was your... It shows how careful you have to be with language. Language is quite an emotive sort of thing. But I was a little surprised about the Finns and their objection to saying those particular words. But they were very serious about it. The,e weren't Order Members, these were relatively new people, just Friends,I think, at that stage. They thought it was sort of telling lies to say that they were offering those things when they weren't. I tried to explain how one had a sort of imaginative puja that was what we call ~ment~l puja~~ that you mentally created those objects and offered them, 6~t ~: ~ the actual literal, solid objects ~~~r0~t0~eA ~c%uldn't say the words. A

Jz7

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: ~t ~Jo~I~ ~~ ~~~ Su a mandarava flowert if

S : Yes! Alright, let's go on to 35 then.

: "The Buddha said: "If a man smelts iron until all impurities have been eliminated (before proceeding to) make implements with it, the implements will be of fine quality. If one who studies the Way first purges his heart of all foul influences, his actions will then become pure."

S : This is another well-known simile. 'If a man smelts iron until all impurities have been eliminated (before proceeding to) make implements with it, the implements will be of fine quality.' Sometimes the comparison is with silver, removing the impurities from silver or even from gold. There's an extended sort of simile, a whole series of similes, in the (D-asab~~~pa Sutra, t~~sutra of the ten stages of the Bodhisattva. Starting with mining the gold and then smelting the gold, then extracting the gold, then making it stage by stage into a particular shape, into a crown, then putting jewels in the crown. And each stage corresponds to a stage of the Bodhisattva path, ~tk that very elaborate co':rarss~~. So this is of the same kind, and the meaning is 'If one who studies the Way first purges his heart of all foul influences, his actions will then become pure.' It's probably important to understand that our motives are very mixed, our mental states are very mixed, they're a sort of mixture of skilful and unskilful. It's very difficult to separate the two sometimes, if he unskilful must be gradually purged away. There was quite a bit of discussion on this topic in the very early days of the FWBO, though I think the matter's more or less sort of settled now. But some people took the view that you shouldn't do anything if- for instance, you shouldn't perhaps start meditating or shouldn't Go For Refuge~until your motive for so doing was perfectly pure. I pointed out that if you waited until your motive was perfectly pure, you'd probably never do any of those things. And I pointed out that your motive for doing an action, a skilful action, was purified in the course of your actually doing that.~~~. It was unrealistic to think in terms of purifying your motive for doing the action first~and then performing the action.

: The actual process itself often brings up a lot that t realised.

S : Yes. For instance~ people used to say things like: 'Sup, pose I'm meditating with a selfish motive. That isn't any good, so I must get rid of the selfish motive and then I can start meditating. I shouldn't start meditating beforehand. My motive for meditating should be completely pure, completely unselfish, because only then will the medita~on be successful.'

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Do you think there are any, sort of, long-term traps you can fall into with meditating by doing it with the wrong approach or wrong s~~ra o~

S : Well again, it depends what one means by 'doing' the meditation. If you're actually doing it in the real sense as distinct from going through the motions, then the fact that you are doing it and experiencing it is, sort of, self-purifying: If you're actually generating more and more skilful mental states, more and more positive mental states: And if you're just going through the motions of meditating, well, that's another matter. If you're merely sitting there, even though your mind is wandering and you're not making any real effort to meditate, that's something different.

In a way it's a bit like saying, well, suppose you gained Enlightenment and you found it was a dreadful mistake. Supposing you gained Enlightenment only to discover that the Christians were right after all! I think one's views about meditation, or any other aspect of the spiritual life, change very much from time to time as a result of your actual practice and experience. Or perhaps I should say, not your views change, so ~'A~~ OS your attitude. The views technically may not change, but your attitude changes. And certain views to which you perhaps paid lip service become more real to you.

~rtt~t : I~~~ like having faith that the meditation actually works and~just doing puja, ()to do it anyway?

S : L Tk'o~~ydur understanding of what is meant by 'works'- that well may be that. Or you may think of it originally as gaining a kind of 'high'. If you've gained that sort of 'high', well, then, the meditation is working, otherwise not. You may have that view to begin with, but eventually you may see, well, yes, the test of the meditation is that it works, but it can be working very effectively even if you're not experiencing 'highs' in that sort of way.

But does one actually feel that one is doing this sort of thing? That one is engaged in this sort of process of constant purification, the constant elimination of whatever is unskilful? if ~oes one actually feel the process of individual development to be like that? It's only an image.

: I sometimes feel it's more like, sort of, straightening out.

S . Yes. You're all, sort of, crooked to begin with. You need to be straightened. Also one can think of it as a process of growth and unfoldment.

Sometimes a process of refinement.

: That's where the importance of the Sangha comes in, ~L~~~'JD~rC flifot just developing one-sidedly, all on your own and excluding others and not being () t~~

on5 ~e '4.

Jz~

S of 42 S 35 D8 T2 9 S : Anything more to be said about this?

: () what's meant by 'foul influences'

S : Presumably something like unskilful or defiled. ()
) al?t~~ -°defilements. Negative emotion presumably covers everything of
that sort: Because it's 'purges his heart of all foul influences' - kiis minQAis
citt~.

Trt%~ : In a way~i~'s like the interrelation between having
precepts,,~so that you can behave in that way: So that you don t try and
do it first without sort of (acting?) and you don't do the action without the
skilfulness ()

S : Yes. You don't perform the action without some idea
of what you ought to be doing: Even though in the course of performing the action
your idea about the action may be modified. Alright~ shall we carry on, then?
36: There's quite a number of sayings (if)

: The Buddha said: "I~t is hard for one to leave the grosser forms of incarnation and
be born a human if being. "It is hard for such a one to escape being a woman and be
born a man. "It is hard for such a one to be born with all his organs in perfect condition: "It is
hard for such a one to be born in a central country. "It is hard for such a one to be born
directly into Buddhist surroundings. "It is hard for such a one to come in contact with the
Way. "It is hard for such a one to cultivate faith in his mind: "It is hard for such a one to attain
to the Bodhi- heart: "It is hard for such a one to attain to (the state where) nothing is practised
and nothing manifested:"

S : Alright. First of all: "It is hard for one to leave the
grosser forms of incarnation and be born a human being. What are
these grosser forms of incarnation'?

Vo~cife~ - Animals, Pretas, denizens of Hell. This is very much stressed in
traditional Buddhist teaching-that one is very lucky to be a human being at all, because there
are so many other thousands of species. You could, statistically at least, just as well have
been born as an ant or a newt or a python or a butterfly or a parrot or a monkey or whatever.
But this is of course only statistically. But nonetheless human life is a great opportunity, a
wonderful opportunity. It represents at th~L~?east a considerable evolutionary achievement.
After all, here you are with your physical body , your two arms and your two legs and
your,what do they call it? Your opposable thumb and fingers. No other creature can do

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S(ctd) : this. You see? It's such a wonderful evolutionary achievement, and this
makes possible all sorts of manipulations. Production of tools and so on and so forth. But

even if if a chimpanzee or gorilla, don't think that they can do this in the way that you can. And what about your eye? Your bifocal vision? And your upright posture? These have been achieved at enormous evolutionary expense. The fact that you stand upright~ even. The fact that you can speak. Well, you have to learn as a baby but you learn very quickly, and the human race developed speech to that extent over a period of hundreds of thousands of years. So look how far you've come already and how lucky you are to be a human being. To have consciousness and self-consciousness. To be able to think in terms of further development instead of it all being left, so to speak, to chance and the general evolutionary urge. So whether or not it's hard in the literal sense for one to believe in the grosser forms of~ncarnation as well as human beings, it's certainly a wonderful opportunity to be born a human being. You've come so far but you can go so much farther. You can become an Enlightened human being. There is a verse in the Bible - not that I usually quotL t~~ ~bIc- I think it's in the Psalms, that we are tfearfully and wonderfully made'. Except that it isn't a question of being made but of having evolved. Think of the structure of the eye. Think of the nervous system. Think of your musculature. Even your skeletal structure. Think of t~c circulation of the blood.

: The structure of the ()

How can animals escape being reborn as animals~ then? Do they act (well to other animals?)

S : Well, if one is speaking in terms of escape, well, what does that presuppose? It presupposes choice. Choice presupposes conscious thought. I mean do the animals have that? That is the~quest~~,n. Also what is meant by the transition~kOf one species into another from the spiritual point of view? I mean animals don't seem to have individual reflexive consciousness in the way that human beings have. So in what sense can one speak about~£\$animal being'reborn~ inverted commas, as a human being at all? if It's generally considered, I think, that animals, especially the lower animals, have a sort of group consciousness. Whereas in the case of human beings they don't only have a group consciousness, they have an individual consciousness. So how does the process occur? What is the mechanism of that process? Does it really occur at all in the literal sense? Do animals,so to speak, ascend from the animal world and become literally reincarnated as individual human beings? Is it a question of a sor~of fragment of the animal group consciousness being a bit more highly individualised and sort of breaking off and sort of floating free and then becoming incarnated in a human body?

33'

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S(ctd) : Is that what happens? Do you see what I mean? All these sort of questions are raised by the very question, well, do animals reincarnate as human beings? I mean the traditional replies are a bit native, if I may say so. They have not been fully worked out~in

philosophical terms.

~vt . But surely if our consciousness has the ability to become more refined, surely there would be a principle applying to all consciousness~ so it must in some way be growing. I can see it with my horse, for instance. I mean sometimes it was as if he was more human than Sot't the people I meet.

S : Yes, but it's i¹/₄jiuo rse, aif. horse that was associating with human beings. Perhaps that introduces a different factor. Perhaps that is the mechanism of development for animals. But what about, what did animals do before there were any human beings? In that case. Do you see what I mean? It may be a mechanism now, but what about the time before there were human beings? if So it's not an easy matter, really. One can't answer it in sort of common-sense terms. I mean most animals don't seem to have an individualised consciousness of the type that could be reborn as a human being or even as another animal in the strict sense. It's as though their little bit of consciousness goes back into the pool.

: I remember in one of the 'Songs of Milarepa' one of

the disciples, I'm not sure, somebody died and was reborn as an ant in a dung heap, or a beetle, a dung beetle and I think he actually spoke about in that fate?)

S : Well if I, how literally can one take that? There seems to be no reliable instance in the Pali scriptures, that is to say the earlier parts of them, of the Buddha referring to an actual case of somebody's rebirth as an animal or an animal's rebirth as a human being. There are some sort of general statements about the possibility of being reborn as an animal as well as a human being, but these don't seem to be among the earliest strata of the Pali Canon, nor is any individual inst~ uce actually given. So it's very doubtful whether the Buddha actually taught the rebirth of animals as human beingS~ Or vtct \ltrsa.

~t'sA : So it's more as a metaphor.

S : Yes. Well, not even quite that. I mean, if that sort of statement was made at all, it's more in the context of the general- teaching abo~t karma and as a sort of dreadful warning about what could happen or might happen if you just slipped too far down on the spiritual scale.

But it must have happened at one point, because we're here.

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S : Well, yes. But that is on the assumptions of, one might say, naturalistic biological evolution. The traditional Buddhist teaching is a little different. Because the traditional Buddhist teaching speaks in terms of beings descending from a higher sphere and uniting as it were with the

more developed animal forms. You see?

: (I ~~, (~J~ ye" (t~t)

S : if ~~~~' In t~e ~93~\$~4 ~utta. I referif to it in the 'Survey '~ actually, where I speak of a double line of evolution, biological evolution and spiritual involution. But the whole question raises all sorts of if further questions. I think one always has to examine the assumptions behind one's questions, even. Even looking to this whole question of individualis-e~ consciousness. In what sense °does one speak of an individual consciousness or of a consciousness so if to ~p?~k returning to the pool? In what sense does one speak of a collective consciousness? I mean, bees and ants especially are said to have group consciousnesses, collective consciousnesses. Well, what does that mean? if And similarly, what does one really mean by~ne having an individual consciousness? And also there is the question, what is the relationship between mind and body, co~scio~sv;~ss and the physical body? There are all these questions to be looked into. But nonetheless, however it came about or didn't come about, here you are, a human being. And how lucky you are! Do you see what I mean? It's like inheriting a fortune. If you don't know where the fortune came from, you don't really know who made all that money. if All you know is you've inherited it and are free to spend it. Perhaps that is all that really matters. Here you are, a human being, equipped with senses, mind, intelligence, consciousness, awareness, energy, every- thing. But that is traditionally expressed: if if "It is hard for one to leave the grosser forms of incarnation" I don't really like that term flincarrntion "

at all - °and be born a human being It really means you're lucky to be a human being.

Alright, what about number two? "It is hard for such a one to escape being a woman and be bornaL%a man." What does that suggest? Well, what is the under- lying assumption ? This is what one has to examine.

: It reflects the cultural attitudes of the time. S : Possibly, possibly.
: Or is it more difficult for a woman? : Women are less able to develop spiritually.

J33

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S : That seems to be the assumption~ or that it is more difficult. So does one agree with that or does one not? ~o(oes one think it might have been true in the Buddha's time but isn't any longer true?

S~e~A~si~: You'd have to have some way of estimating spiritual development between otherwise comparable people who are of different sexes, and I think that's very difficult.

Could it have something to do with ~O h~v~ ~ri opportunity rather than.. :?It's more difficult for a woman to get the opportunity..

S . Yes. But what does one mean by the opportunity and what sort of difficulty has one in mind with regard to getting that opportunity?

~~loean& : It implies that women were not in a very good position to
~<rtric~c~

CARLstvic : t~ducated, maybe.

S . Well now, education proinliLy doesn't have very much to do with it~if because there were plenty of both men and women who gained Enlightenment without education ~~ t~~ ~oot~rn s~riae.

: Perhaps favourable conditions.

: to bear ~ lot oi if responsibilities; it took up all
their.... (£~d o~ side)

S : ~~ just a question of busyness, because in the Buddha's day, women haot the option of Going Forth. Some women did. Some women gave their life to it.

t4rlen~ : They had to ask the permission of their husbands, didn't they?

S : Yes, but the husbands had to ask permission of their wives. Yes, ~hat's the Vinaya rule. A married man cannot become a monk without the permission of his wife. Oh, if we're clearing up some little misunderstandings! In the case of an unmarried man, he should ask the permission of his parents. It's not considered good to Go Forth without the permission of yOur~~~arents: Likewise if you're married you have to ask~permission of your wife or husband, as the case may be. So, I mean, it couldn't have been that drawback, because it would have applied equally the other way round.

~~j~~: Ah, but how many women said 'no' and how many men? How many wives said 'no' and how many husbands?

S : There isn't any record) and you can always do a fast to death!

~rt's~ : I suppose, statistically speaking, tbre were fewer women (than men3)

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S : Statistically there were fewer women Going Forth in the

Buddha's time than there were men: Statistically.

9~ny~v~ti' : Was it childbearing? S : Well, how would childbearing come in the way, t'l'ifcsi?.

: Well, I was thinking, in the Buddha's time, most women would be married or would have to get married.

S : But most men would be married too.

Carl~ : If you didn't live as long as most people today and you were having children, you were married and having children every few years, you would, of course, have been breast feeding and then you cannot leave: You can't:

S : You're not... but you can stop having children, whether you're a woman or a man, and some did. So...

: But if you left the village, I mean, it would be very dangerous physically for a woman in those days to wander about in the forest.

S : That is true. SkfQcAh& : If she did leave her village, she'd probably get

: But can we take it back to this step, from, say a re-birth point of view? When you're going to be reborn it's suggesting~, in fact, well I don't know if it is, but I (think it is) suggestin~ that more beings are attracted to the men than they're reborn as women, than they are attracted to the women being reborn as men.

S : Say that again.

~~.if . Taking it, I mean, I don't know, right, but taking it e~tt;hs it S : a hypothesis.

E/e- . Hy~othetically speaking, it's traditionally said that if you were reborn as a woman then you were attracted to the man. Yw~jealousy for the woman...

S . Are you referring to the 'Book of the Dead' teachings? Yes.

S : At the moment of conception or just before the moment of conception the consciousness to be reborn has a sort of vision if- of the future parents~ and if that consciousness is more attracted to the father on~ feels jealous of the mother if it is reborn as a woman and vice versa. V~~this is said. So what light does that throw on the present question?

Well, what it seemed to say to me was that more...

3~5:

(ctd) : Well, it would seem that more people are attracted~, or more beings are reborn -
~~rSet itt I can't sort of articulate it, but it is something to do with -

S . Something to do with the number of men and the number of women...

: .. the number of men and the number of women, yes, or the quality of consciousness which is surely, somehow being born a man is actually connected with the quality of consciousness in connection with development, rather than ~~certain sort of ways that tie people up like women having babies or whatever. And I was just wondering if it, from the point of view of whether that quality of consciousness actually being attracted and it actually be attracted to a woman to be reborn as a man. Or... It's getting too complicated, I can't.:

S . I was thinking your argument seems to be working against you.

I know, I know, but I can't...

: It is hard for us to see why any woman would want to be reborn a man so that she could...

I'm not speaking up for being a woman, by the way. I'm not saying...

S . No. I was under the impression you were doing the opposite.

No. I'm not trying...

S . That's why I said it seemed your argument was going against you.

I was just trying to make it more clear but it hasn't really done that.

There's more men ~O~h~ 5~~t'.~ti'~ai(y~ than women And they die SOon~r.

S . No. They die sooner only under certain conditions, that is to say in the modern industrialised West, due to working conditions. In Finland, for instance, where women have virtual equality with men, there's no difference in the age at which they die.

7ri3~ . But I think in that first couple of years there's more child, male infant deaths than there are +~~~1~.

American men tend to die quite a bit younger than English men as well~ because of the highetpressure of jobs and things over there.

rne~ : C9uld it be that when that was written, it was considered more disadvantageous to be born a woman because of having children~but that that isn't necessarily

(ctd) : something which does prevent you from developing spiritually?

S : I think, probably, it's not just a question of having children, but of wanting to have children. Do you see what I mean?

Biological urge.

S : Whereas if you simply have them or at least you just have the, opportunity, the option of having them or not, well, it's a simple matter. If you want to lead a spiritual life, well, you decide not to. But if it's a question of the desire to have children, that might be a more complicating factor. Especially if, in effect, you weren't really free to choose. It seems to me that if there were any sort of objective basis to this sort of statement, it can only reside in the fact that it is the woman who bears the child and whose being is more intimately bound up with that whole sort of process.

I think that what gets me is the word 'escape

S . Well, don't forget 'escape' is being used in other contexts too.

~~riSt~~e : Is it anything to do with expressing creativity, somehow? I don't know about having children, but maybe it's a creative thing to have a child and a man can't do that and might try somehow in other ways to..

S : But then again, of course, it raises the question, well what do you mean by creative? Can what is an automatic process be creative? In the sense in which, for instance~ artistic creativity is created, do you think? In that case, if if all female animals are creative. I mean a cow is as creative as a woman in that case. Do you see what I mean? I think the word 'creative' is used a bit loosely nowadays. This is what I'm really getting at.

~~~k'~n~e: It's that (cyclical?) creativity, isn't it? Having children is cyclical create... well, it, S just a cyclical thing, you're propagating or continuing.

S : I would say that in my terminology, the creative is the essentially non-cyclical. Yes? I mean I contrast it with the creative to the cyclical. The cyclical is productive and can be positive rather than negative, but it isn't quite creative. Do you think there's anything in the suggestion that, for women, having children was more important psychologically if than it was for men? And that that was an obstacle, or at least a complication, in leading the spiritual life, as the spiritual life was usually envisaged in the Buddha's day? That is to say, especially as involved in Going Forth etc. etc?

(sounds of agreement)

S : Because the Buddha, on a famous occasion, made it quite clear, in response to a question, that women were capable of gaining Enlightenment. He gave a categorical reply in the affirmative and according to the Pali Canon many women did gain Enlightenment, mostly bhi~kunis, but some others also.

: Maybe if it wasn't so necessary for them to actually Go Forth, but they could practise as house... in their situation more, as an inner practi~e, which they did in India, didn't they?

: It's suggesting the opposite, t~t ~l~e~ °. - -

S . if Tifhere is att~~~for instance, in the Udana, t~at ~clve on tkt~~s'4~e~t if; more than once, a reference to ladies of the king's harem becoming Stream Entrants. Have you come across that~ or do you know of that discussion?

: ( ) that one when it caught fire.

S : I don't remember. It might have been. But anyway there was this instance of all the ladies of the harem, apparently, becoming Stream Entrants. I suggested it was because the ladies in the royal harem had plenty of leisure, they didn't have to work or any~thing of that sort and they became interested in the Buddha's teaching, they must have taken up the practice of meditation etc. They gained Enlightenment. So, yes. One doesn't absolutely have to Go Forth in order to gain Enlightenment - in fact, even early Buddhism doesn't say that1 though it certainly places the emphasis on Going Forth, b~~ when pressed would say that that is not absolutely essential to gain Enlightenment, though it does represent a very favourable condition.

: But, Bhante, you said that they gained Stream Entry and then you said they gained Enlightenment.

S : Yes. In this particular instance, that is to say of the ladies of the harem, it is mentioned that they gained Stream Entry. It is to be assumed, though not explicitly mentioned, that later on, if not in this life, if in a future life~'iligt'~tsssi~t ai'ast have been ~otn~~. if There are other references to laymen and laywomen attaining even higher states, in the Pali canon itself. But nonetheless it is clear that Going Forth creates especially favourable conditions. That is the view of the Pali Canon.

~~~vICnL : When you said psychologically more important from a woman's point of view, having babies, did you mean that as a sort of natural state?

S : Yes.

: Not something that's imposed?

S : Not culturally imposed. Yes.

3~g

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: Because it's always seemed to me that it was the culturally imposed conditioning that was making it more unfavourable: Because even talking about Going Forth- I mean men are always sort of encouraged to Go Forth in the ordinary kind of way, whereas women are nOt.

S : Well, it wasn't quite like that in the case of men in the Buddha's day, because in the Pali scriptures there are quite a number of references to men wanting to Go Forth and being strongly discouraged by their relations. Even today in India people approve of Going Forth in general, but if it comes to their husband or son or brother, they don't like it: I mean the Buddha himself Went Forth against the wishes of his parents. So it isn't as though men were really encouraged to Go Forth by their families: fl% but if they did it, very often it was against the wishes of their family:

~~rI4sL : Yes, but there is a feel that it's alright for young men to sort of whizz round the world for a couple of years and sort of get involved in that kind of adventurous kind of thing and it's not really:..

S : Well, I think in the case of women in ancient India, if there was any sort of discouragement of this sort in the case of women, whether in connection with the spiritual life or not, it was just because of the greater vulnerability of the female. Even now in India it's not easy for women to wander around on their own. So there was therefore a greater attitude of protectiveness towards women.

!4ctl . But there is that great assumption that comes up into it somewhere, that a woman is not fulfilled unless she has children. I mean where does that come from?

S . Would you not say that this is how most women do feel? I mean you might argue if that if this is sort of culturally imposed upon them, if but some people would disagree with that.

~~rIesi~ : I think it's culturally imposed. S . You don't think that biology has much to do with it?

: Well, maybe there's a bit of that, maybe there's a mix, but I think, I don't think you can just say that it's a biological urge and that's the end of the story, because I think it's not.

S . Well in the case of human beings, there's probably nothing which is just biological, there are all sorts of other factors involved. But nonetheless the biological can be a powerful determinant.

Corla : I know this with the twins, there is this incredible difference, maybe they're untypical of their sexes, but Daniel's interested very much in playing with things, objects, and when he's drawing it's aeroplanes or the sun or a tree

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(ctd) : but he very seldom draws faces of people: And Abby, when she's drawing, faces of people, lots of faces of people in her drawings. Trees, houses, the sun, but the faces, all the time faces she's drawing, and I think women perhaps get greater something from faces. They've done experiments on this actually, to find that women actually respond physically stronger to faces and men respond physically stronger to landscapes, when they had them wired up and showed them pictures and that sort of thing. How accurate that is, I don't know. But I think there is some, having seen them, being very reticent to accept any biological difference of course, but I do actually, from the fact that it is quite, a

a biological difference:

On the whole little girls are more socially developed than little boys are, which stems from biological differences. I think it's a very obvious thing. (At times, when I see a child, I think, 'he's got a biological element in this which you don't find in men in the case of being a father. For a man being a father is not a question of...')

and I think it's a very obvious thing. So, I think it's a very obvious thing.

S : 'm' - 'S' - 't' - '00' - 'L' - 'a' - 'S' - 'e' - 'f' - 't' - 't' - 'P' - 'w' - 'i' - 'C' - 't' - 'h' - 'l' - 'C' - 'he feeling, after talking to quite a number of individual women about their attitude to children and having babies, that there is a definite biological element in this which you don't find in men in the case of being a father. For a man being a father is not a question of...')

ask : Well, I'm not sure of that. I think there are some really want children:

CavI~ Some, yes, but on the whole, Trish, Some: S . Well, there are some women who don't want...

SMIQ : () men and women, it seems that they, some people are interested in watching human beings develop and helping them to develop from a very early age and you don't get a chance if you aren't near children or have some of your own.

S : But it seems to me that it must make a difference if you've carried the child within you, say, for nine, ten months. It must make quite a difference. Not only the fact that you have done it, but that you can do that, that there is that capacity. Whereas a man has nothing analogous to that in his experience at all. In fact, I might even find it very difficult to understand.

: But that doesn't stop the man acting, taking part in that child.

S : Oh, no. But for the man the baby's more like a little stranger, even though it's his. He knows that he's begotten it but even then, I mean even that he can't be absolutely certain of in the way that a woman can be certain that it's her child. He doesn't have that assurance, no, he doesn't. He doesn't have that biological assurance.

So for him it's a little Stranger and he feels good

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S(ctd) : towards it, It's his child, he believes, and, yes, maybe he likes children too, but in the case of a woman it's something she's produced from herself Yes? She must feel differently.

i4~rie~~~ : I think it, I mean I can see that that might make it easier for the man to leave the child, but not necessarily that it means that the woman's going to feel more for it:

S : I would say that fact makes it less, what shall I say, less easy for a woman not to have children. This is what I think the difference is. The fact that she is, as it were, built by nature to be able to do that. Yes? And that her relationship to the child is so different from that of the man, biologically speaking:

~grI~U : But how do you know that before? You don't know that until after you've had it~~~~ you?

S : Well, this is what I think: I mean so many women have a strong feeling to have a child and I think this is not just culturally determined. I think it's too strong for that, and certainly that's not the feeling one gets, talking to certain women at least, that it's something that's been sort of culturally imposed on them. It seems to go so deep and to be so strong and in a way even so blind. Yes? So I think this is important, - even from a spiritual point of view~, to decide whether it is so or not. Yes? Because how is one to deal, in connection with the spiritual life, from a woman's point of view, with having a child or not? Can you dismiss the possibility lightly, so to speak? Or do you have to take it much more seriously? In other words, when a woman comes to you and says, I'm not sure whether having a child will come in the way of my spiritual life or not, can you sort of take it in the same way~ that you would take it if a man was to come to you and say, I'm not sure about the wife and I having children or not. Can you take it in the same way? It becomes a practical question if one is called upon to give one's opinion.

: It's a long-term commitment. I mean one can't just treat it lightly.

S : I'm not just thinking in terms of long-term commitment. : It's because you're going

against your own nature.

5~foefrta : A man would treat it less....

S : I mean certainly it is a long-term commitment, but I think it isn't just that> because there are other long- term commitments t~at~o,,&igkt6~£n. Maybe it's to a sick mother or something of that sort.

: Are you saying that if the woman really feels that, she's going against her own nature more than if the man might think he wants a child?

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S : Well this is, in effect, what I'm saying. Or at least what I'm wondering, at least that. Yes? Because, as we discussed the other day, if you want to start on the spiritual life you must know and feel where you are at: And I just wonder~and again~ perhaps, I'm not really doing more than that~whether some women might sort of accept that the desire to have a baby was mainly just a cultural conditioning, and in that belief, sort of dis- regard her own feeling to have a child and to that extent become alienated from her own feelings, thus creating difficulties in the spiritual life itself: This is what I'm concerned with, this sort of possibility at least: Though at the same time one might recognise that there are some women who, in a sense, are more like men and who don't experience that urge to have children and who can quite positively just disregard it, if they feel it from time to time: It seems that there are such women.

: () have to examine an awful lot of ()

S : An awful lot Of: :?

: attitudes. That you may have been brought up to assume and I think that's what happens~ that if you do have someone who very strongLy knows they do want children even when they themselves are little girls~ and others aren't interested. But I think in a sense there are an awful lot of people in between who probably grow up, marry and have children without an awful lot of thought as to whether in fact they're doing what's expected of them or whether they really want it to be that way.

S : Well, they think they want something, just as they think they want a semi-detached and they think they want to get married.

S~to~~~ : Can it be anything to do with karma? That there are certain people that are linked in a previous...

S : Well, if one goes by tradition, yes. Yes. I mean I don't want to indulge in pseudo-romanticism, but there are instances in the Pali scriptures of old couples taking a vow to be reborn together and to marry again in the

next life and be husband and wife again. In Indian literature, this sort of ideal, if you like, is quite highly regarded. That you're not, that you're so happy together that you'd like to be reborn in the same area and be husband and wife again.

: Well I meant really.. S : It suggests the marriage has been very successful.

S~iO~M~ : ... that a child, I mean that a son or daughter, might have had some other relationship to one in another kind of situation.

~4Q

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S : Well, these investigations which have been done, for what they're worth, into alleged cases of reincarnation suggest that you're very often reborn within the same family. And they e~reor~ to ~cort if cases where someone has died, say the grand- father has died and has been reborn as his own grand- son. Yes. That is to say reborn as the son of his son or his daughter. And other cases where a child has died very young, say at the age of two, and the mother has become pregnant again subsequently and the same consciousness has been reborn again as the child of the same parents. So these sort of investigations have uncovered these sort of cases:

S~IOcA\$& : But there are stories in (tantric?) tradition of people being born again in different situations so

that they can put right something or continue some...

S : Well, tradition seems to suggest that you've got a sort of karmic connection with the group that you belonged to formerly, even with the tribe or the family~~here S a strong tendency, and maybe it's no more than that, to be reborn in familiar surroundings, Very often in the same family or the same town. Anyway, what was the connection here, or is this a little tangent?

SuIc~~~ : Well, I'm just wondering if that can be the reason for some people wanting to have children and that others don't seem to want to at all. They may not... I mean there may be someone trying to arrive.

S : Some women have told me c~rious stories about things that happened at the time~~~ey conceived, about really feeling that there was a definite

sort of entity near and wanting to be reborn. Do you see what I mean?
 Some people would dismiss that as just imagination, but there are these sort of
 reports and one even k~v~s if people ~ho ~~~ rtia~tA 5~cSi a
 if if as though a third factor had come in~ and this is what the Pali
 scriptures also say, they call it the, well, my,thologically, the if gano(~arv~ L?3
 That it S not just a question of you and your sexual partner coming
 together. There's a third factor which is, so to speak, the entity or the
 consciousness to be reborn. So that fact perhaps, if it is a fact,
 needs to be taken into consideration.

It could get into a fatalistic thing that because you are born a woman therefore it's your karmic
 ()

S : Well, that's a misunderstanding of karma. Because you could say
 because you're born poor therefore it's your karma to remain poor. And whether
 you're a woman or whether you're a man, you're still a human being, and
 a human being as such can evolve. And that if there's any doubt about
 the matter, well, if one has faith in what the Buddha said, the Buddha has stated
 categorically

in reply to a question that women are capable of gaining
 Enlightenment. And in the Buddha's own day and subsequently, there are

3k3

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S(ctd) : records of women having done just that. So even if, supposing that there is
 some initial handicap, it is only a handicap and it certainly doesn't get in the way if one is
 really determined. But so far as I'm concerned the only practical difference it makes is that
 one has to be careful, if one is called upon to encourage a woman in leading a spiritual life, if
 the question arises as to whether she should have children or not. One should perhaps not
 assume that she can, as it were, by-pass that, necessarily. At least one has to consider that
 carefully. And also I think we must remember that in the FWBO, the women that we do
 have, Order Members and Mitras especially, are not representative. And if the majority of
 them don't have children, and the majority of them don't, they're not representative of women
 at large. Do you see what I mean? So one mustn't argue from the women that one knows
 with- in the FWBO to women in general. Does that seem reasonable or is~~ t);¬
 satisfactory? There are still reservations It's really impossible to prove Sci~ntificalllyif one
 way or the other. Do you see what I mean? Because you can never isolate people away from
 all cultural conditioning. Therefore you could never actually know scientifically what is due
 to cultural conditioning and what is not. That's impossible. You may sort of have a sort of
 working conviction, but it can't be, I don't think it can be, scientifically established one way or
 the other. Would you agree with that?

Harfr~e : Yes.

S . But that doesn't mean that you can, you should not, be careful in the way that I've suggested, just in case.

It's quite good to com~ into contact with someone who really wants a child,
~t~~~~~e0~how different that experience isfrv~ just sometimes ()

S . Yes, yes. Well, I would almost say in the case of some women there is a lust to have a child. It's as strong as that.

C~ri~ . Abby seems to be very, very keen on children, so in order to kind of help to break some of the... some of it a bit, I said: - 'You must always think that there are a lot of children without mothers and fathers here.' Right? So that at least this'll be a possibility that she could work with children that don't have parents or something like this. A different kind of satisfaction.

S . Yes, I mean the fact that you like children doesn't necessarily mean that you're going to have children of your very own. There are a lot of children in need of a mother and father and so on. Maybe if if one should think more in those sort of terms.

CarI~ : That's MorC if encouraging.

: (The usual?) of difficulty about the whole thing of having children f~om the sort of biological

~44

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(ctd) : point of view is that I don't experience myself, my body, as being consistent. I'm sort of constantly shifting. I don't know whether it's anything to do with your menstrual cycle, the use of hormones and things, but I wondered if it was the same maybe for other women.

S . Well, I think one constantly shifts about other things as well, other interests, not j~t t~t.

° Buift that's the one that definitely seemed linked up with a sort of biological thing. Which seems to be quite a if

But that could be really positive.()

° But I was thinking of that particularly of seeing the difference between men and women, because in a way men's physical self or physical state is more constant, I mean throughout their own life () sort of shifts are degrees of that.

S : They have discovered, by the way, that men also go through something akin to the menstrual cycle, but in a very subtle way, a very minor sort of way. In fact they've discovered that most human beings go through seven cycles at the same time. I mean not necessarily over the same timespan though maybe in the case of all human beings, monthly cycles, starting at different points in the month and all going on at the same time. I think at least three in the case of both men and women. But in the case of women one particular cycle is much more prominent, much more consciously experienced, but there are these symptoms in the case of men too. There's even a male menopause which is more serious in some men than in others. But again it isn't ~s%' dramatic as the female equivalent. Which again suggests there's a bit of the male in every female and a bit of the female in every male. It's not a question of completely ~mutually exclusive sexes. Otherwise they could never understand each other.

When you're speaking of the lust for a child, I was thinking back to, like, men and when lust arises in men, like, the Buddha's very strong that the root of that if the mind is actually changed, so in the case of a woman how would that apply? Like, if you've got a strong lust to have a child and it's coming from an unskilful state of mind, then, what...

S . Well, then you shouldn't just check that lust to have a child. That would be like the man castrating him- self.

: That's true, but at the same time you shouldn't go maybe and have it you shouldn't necessarily act on that lust-because if it comes from an unskilful sort of state of mind then the results may be unskilful.

S : But in the case of having a child it isn't a volition~ completely. I mean that is perhaps the whole point, it's a sort of function, something that almost takes

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S(ctd) : you over perhaps. Do you see what I mean? Something that you don't have much choice whether to or not. I think perhaps this is an essential part of it, wouldn't you say? At least on some occasions. Well, I can't speak from experience, I have to go by hearsay.

~VLStI : It certainly seems to be a bit of a danger point as you get into your early thirties because you become conscious that you haven't got that much time left to do it~if to have a child safely.

earI~ : I think on the whole it is something that should be discouraged if a woman can rest without, be at rest without doing it. I think it should be discouraged. If, however, you

feel like you will have no rest unless do, then you have to.

S ° That's right, yes.

: And I notice, though, that even though women can rest without doing it, I notice by the reaction that women who hadn't done it are so averse to it than women who have chosen eventually, that there must have been a lot of conflict in themselves still.

S : This is why I think that from the spiritual point of view, say, if a woman who genuinely wanted to lead a spiritual life, at the same time couldn't rest, as you say,~until she had a child,I'd say, well, from a spiritual point of view I'd advise you to go ahead and have the child.

: °n~ do 'It

S : Well, not even necessarily I hurry up1, that would depend on circumstances. But I certainly wouldn't adopt a strict line that any woman who wanted to lead a spiritual life is automatically discouraged from having children. This is the practical difference it makes from my point of view. If she is, sort of, not at rest because she hasn't had a child and it seems that she won't be at rest unless she has it, I'd say, well, as far as I can see you should go ahead. I mean there is much that you can do even while you're pregnant, even while the child is small, from the spiritual point of view and it won't be totally dependent for more than a few years and you can gradually get back into things, more constructively. ~his is why I considered the question so seriously at all, just because sometimes women do ask m~if what I think. So I have to consider very seriously, I can't reply lightly. So I have over the years come to the conclusion, if it seems that a woman is going to be not at rest unless she has a child, even if she does have a definite spiritual urge, well, let her have the child, let her have the child too. Even though there's a certain amount of, let's say - well, practical inconvenience. She won't be able to go on retreats for a couple of years. But it isn't really very much more than that.

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S(ctd) : Really. Certainly by the time the child is going to school, she'll have quite a bit of time to herself and she will be able to meditate frequently. Probably that's difficult until the child starts going to school, unless she can make other arrangements. But I think from the long-term point of view, such oman is probably better off ~&t4n9t1~child. Anyway, perhaps we can stop there. Those who've had children can feel happy and those who~haven't, they can feel happy too!

: Well done!

~~ritst : Would anyone like a (shot?) of mine? ~D t~~~k ~O~. S : In other words please yourself!

S : So where did we get to this time? Ah, yes. We were congratulating ourselves on escaping being born a woman and being born a man!

: Can I ask a question, please? If we could go back a bit to 35~ When we were talking about meditation.

S . Yes.

: I wondered whether you felt that being in the city you could continue your meditation practice and develop if in that situation, or whether we needed to go into a more Vajraloka-type situation; at least in the country, be in better surroundings. Or whether it was a balance?

S : It does seem that if one is to get into one's meditation, assuming one to be a relative beginner, I think you need, from time to time, more conducive surroundings, as you get in the country. But I think once you've really got into your practice, it shouldn't make much difference whether you're in the country in a secluded retreat or in the city. Some people even have reported having had much better meditations, at least from time to time, sitting in their city meditation room. So I think we have to be careful not to conclude that because admittedly, yes, in a way, the country retreat situation is better, you can't really do very much when you are in the city. I think once you're established in your meditation, even though that may involve retreats and so on to begin with, once you're established in it, you can carry on anywhere. And make progress anywhere.

6~ re:eaU~ I saw this in India, as I think I've mentioned already before, with our married Order Members living at home in

a small house with a large family. But they do get into their meditation and they do carry on, there's no doubt about that, they do make progress. They are no less into it than people in this country who have more advantageous conditions. It's just a question of trying to see at any given time exactly where you are. If you are, say, living and working in the city, if you feel that your meditation is flagging for one reason or another, well, by all means have a meditation retreat in the country, whether at Vajraloka or elsewhere. But I'm sure once you've established yourself in your practice, you can carry on in the city, even for quite long periods. Provided, of course, you keep up a regular practice. I think the great temptation is to think you can't do that in the city, or it's very difficult. Or you more easily find excuses. We did talk about this a bit down in London when I took various men's study groups and talked with the community; and I made the point that you must really sort of plan your day, in a way, around your meditation. Because it's no use, say, going to a late night film and then saying, if of course I can't get up in the morning and meditate because I'm too tired. You have to think in advance and say, if I look, I have to get up in the morning to meditate. Can I really go and see that late night film? Not say, I've got to go and see

the late night film and let the meditation look after

S(ctd) : itself. This is usually what happens. Sometimes you can go and see the late night film and get up for early morning meditation, but you must be sure that you are able to do that. But only too often the attitude seems to be, we'll do every thing else, we'll do all the things we want to do; if we can we'll fit meditation in, if not, too bad. One of our busy community members at Fadmaloka consulted me about this, because he found meditation was slipping just because he was so busy. So I said: "Meditate every morning at 5.30, a double session, and fit everything else into that1,. He found it worked.

: But Bhante, do you think that it's true that you need less sleep as you meditate, or is it just that...

S : As you meditate more, that is to say, not as you Stif~u~~l~ to meditate for &onger pif~~~~5, not that, but as you actually succeed in immersing yourself if in dhyanic or quasi-dhyanic states, yes, you do need less sleep. Of course you must take into consideration the sort of person you are to start with. It does seem that different kinds of people need differeifut aifmounts of sleep. Younger people usually need more than older people; as you get older you~definitely need less sleep. If, say, at twenty-five you need eight hours a day, probably at si~ty"five you can manage with five or six hours a night very easily. Some people, even ~okt18 people in some cases, can get on with S~X 0~if 5e~enif~~~u~~l~~~~g~t~if Aiffewifseem to need ten hours and not tb be able to function really properly unless they have them. So one just has to see what one' 5 own position is. But even though it may be admitted that some circumstances or some conditions if~~~ more conducive to meditation than others, it doesn't mean that when you find yourself in less conducive or lessifpropjtious conditions, you are justified in using that as an excuse for not keeping up a regular practice. I think one must be really careful about that. Not adopting a sort of fatalistic attitude, well, I can't be expected to meditate regularly under these conditions. I think you almost always can. If you can't it means you should really consider reorganising your life. Anyway, we come on to, what is it? "It is hard for such a one to be born with all his organs in perfect condition. Some people are born deaf, some are born blind, some are born dumb. This is not t~ say, especially nowadays, that even then one cannot develop. The~e have been~0~a V~y famous cases, haven't there? Of blind pe~ple, handicapped people, doing all sorts of things. There was the case of Helen Keller; some of you must have heard of her. There are people without arms or learning to paint, holding the brush in their mouths. So, yes, no doubt it is a handicap not tO have all one's organs in perfect condition, but it doesn't make it if impossible for one to develop. You may know there is a Mitra in Glasgow~w~9~h~a~~ an,,~~~~e;r accident when he was about eighteen or ninete n;~~ut he' goes on retreats, he's recently moved into a flat on his

S(ctd) : own and he's going to Tuscany. But he has to get about in a wheelchair; the loweifr part of his body is paralysed due to an accident, but he Just refuses to accept that as a handicap. He wants to be ordained, and he stands a good chance of it. So again, if you

happen to be defective in this or that organ, even that isn't really an excuse for not developing. So how much less have you an excuse if you have all your organs in perfect condition! "It is hard for such a one to be ifb0~u in a central country." I think it was in the other group that we if talked about central country. Originally it was the (Maj)ti~esha?) the central country of North Eastern India, where the Buddha originally taught. So (M~Aajdesha?) comes to mean an area in which the Buddha's teaching is prevalent, where it's available, where it's accessible, where you can practise it and follow it. So it means it is hard for such a one to be born in a country or in an area whe~~ifh~ Buddhaif's teaching is known and where it is p~5sif~~l~ to practise if Once again, maybe onife should understand that 'it is hard for such a one to be born' as 'one is fortunate~one is borr?'. It'Sif a very valuable opportunity. "It is hard for such a one to be born directly into Buddhist surroundings. What do you think is meant by ' that? "To be born directly into Buddhist surroundings.

In a Buddhist family?

S : In a Bifuddh~5t family, yes, that would be the most direct contact. But this also raises the question, what is a Buddhist family? Is there such a thing as a Buddhist family, as distinct from a number of people living together in a family, who as individu& if (5 follow or practise Buddhism? Is there such a thing as a Buddhist family, would you say?

: ifif it'4 ~~~ if community, ?i.ntkcsense of a community of people pif~~ct~5~~g

S . Yes. : Isn't it just sort of semantics on what we mean by a family?

: Oh, like 'kulas' (like) brotherhood.

S : ~o,what I'm asking is; when if it is said~when one speaks of being born into Buddhist surroundings, and when one speaks of the family as constituting those surroundings, does one mean that by being born into a Buddhist family one has the possibility of contact with Buddhist individuals, ~aybe a Bifuddhist father, a Buddhist mother; or that one has the advantage of being born into a particular type of structure? Do you see what I mean? That is to say, not Just the family in the general sense, but specifically a Buddhist type of family. A type of family structure in accordance with Buddhist principles. If so, what is that structure? What is a Buddhist family~in that 7ense, if there is any such ~~~ugl~~i~ the question I'm ~5k~~g~if .~

So do you think that there is such a thing as a Buddhist family as distinct from individuals, individual Buddhists, living together as a family? Or, one might even say, can

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S(ctd) : one really draw that sort of distinction? Or one may ask, well, if there are individual Buddhists living tOgetherif as a family, how would their family differ from a family of people who were not Buddhists? Is there really such a thing as a Buddhist family?

If so, describe it: Does it consist of mother, father and 2.5 children? Or does it consist of grandfather, four or five grown-up sons - their wives, and twenty children?

It's not got a fixed structure, has it? Because it would depend upon the communication between the individuals concerned.

S : Yes. So if the communication was genuinely Buddhist, then that not tend to give a particular structure to the family?

° Yes, that would. But that wouldn't be the point of it, would it? That may, yes, but then it wouldn't be a fixed structure, because each individual would add something different or if someone new came in, they would add something different. So it would be a more flexible structure...

S : So, in other words, you have characterised the Buddhist family as such. A Buddhist family is one which is more flexible; you could say that.

: There would be an element of almost spiritual hierarchy, wouldn't there? Rather than it being based on seniority or roles.

S : Yes.

else : if I don't think it's a family then

S : Well, that, one might say, would be a question of semantics. You could call it a family or you could not. A family usually means a biological unit, doesn't it? But supposing, actually, your family was a biological family, but it was a Buddhist biological family. What particular characteristics might it have? Apart from being flexible?

Morien : It wouldn't have to be inward-looking and static.

S : Yes.

Also (a sort of openness to the spiritual life?) if

S : Well, might there not be, for instance, a sort of collective family spiritual practice? Might not the family as such have a daily puja? With all the members of the family joining in? Might that not be a possibility? Do you see what I mean?

ELS : They might have a sort of framework according to the Buddhist principle

S : So, presumably, if you are born into a Buddhist family, it's not just being born into a family which contains Buddhist individuals, but born into a family, which even

S(ctd) : though it is a biological group, has a certain type of structure, a certain way of fu~~~~~j~flg~if Just because ali the people in it are following the Buddhist path. ~ifresumably it would be a vegetarian family. Presumably it would be open to visitors,maybe more open to visitors than some families are. Open to other Buddhists coming and staying for a few days or a few weeks. And also within that Buddhist family the biological parents presumably would be less possessive with regard to their biological offspring. Do you see what I mean? That would be a characteristic too. For instance, they wouldn't object if another visiting Buddhist corrected their child for doing something unskilful. They wouldn't object to th~t, they would appreciatelit. Because they would feel, well, it isn't just my child, another person is also taking some responsibility.

What about if the children want to eat m~at?

S : Little savages! ~ It really raises the question of at what age you should regard the child as becoming really independent and as no longer, as it were, under your tutelage. Do you see what~I mean? One day, no doubt, the child will have to go freeif if and do what it wants to do, even though you may consider what it~wants to- do as unskilful. It's just a question of deciding at what point the child should be allowed to sort of depart, in this case perhaps, from the Buddhist tradition.

Q~rta : Perhaps too it's something that's very subtle, because sometimes one of the children actually wants to eat meat and it depends sometimes it's quite easy to persuade them not to but if the desire is too strong, because all of their friends eat meat...

S : Right. Yes.

: ... it can even be something else. I've noticed that- I base it on the strength of their desire. If I think that it's a delicate balance, if I think I'm going to set up an adverse reaction by denying that at that point, because the strength of the desire is that strong; if I think it's going to cause over-reacting, then I'll let them do it. But if it's not too bad, if I can talk them out of it, then I'll try that first. But I have done certain things which I don't agree with, in fact, just because I felt at that particular instance, I'd actually cause an adverse reaction if I was too harsh in, if I was too stern about my principles. It's a very delicate balance.

S : Because, after all, the Buddhist family, like the Buddhist ~ommunity, exists in the midst of a non- Buddhist society. Children, especially if they go to an ordinary school, are subject to all softls of outside influences, and children very often are inte~~ly conformist. They don't want to be different, if they want to do what their friends ~~ school are doing. So one fras to be quite careful that one doesn't set up too much of a tension between the influences to which they

S(ctd) : are subject at h0me~and the influences, even though they are admittedly

unskilful perhaps, to which they are subject outside the home, especially at school.

: It's that delicate balance that~has to be preserved.

S : Yes. And as you said, if you find they don't feel if - really strongly, it's just an idea they got ~rom school, well~ you can, as you say, talk them out of it. If they are really convinced and it means a lot to them, if - it's probably quite inadvisable to insist, even though one might come to that conclusion rather reluctantly, sort of feel that one is surrendering a pr~iple. But on the other hand, one doesn't want to adhere to one's own principles so ~~~~dl~~if~~~b~ rigidly is if not even quite the right word~so strongly, that severe conflicts are set up for the children.

: Yes, and I think that would probably be more unhealthy in the long run. o~ ~oI'r~£~ S : And always,~there is the possibility that later on, when they become maybe more intelligent or when you can discuss things better with them, if if they'll give up eating meat. They'll come to appreciate your point of view.

S~(o~~a : It's sometimes the influence of another relative, a kind of senior, like a granny or someone like that, that might influence them; because children do go by age, don't they? They are always asking; are you older than so-and-so?

S . So they are instinctively hierarchically orientated! Well, you'll have to say: 'T'if.II call in Bhante to talk to you!' if

: If often your children know where the meat comes from, it really puts them off. They don't like the idea of animals being killed.

S . I can remember when I was a boy,for some reason or another I suppose I ~~gttift0 have gone off meat, but I didn't go off meat, but my sister did. She juSt refused to eat meat for several years when she was a small girl. if ~ A;oI I did too.

S : So sometimes this can happen quite spontaneously.

: I remember a small boy, well, my son, coming into a butche~s shop and he looked around and said in a very loud voice: "These are all dead bodies." So I said: "Yes," with everyone listening in the quene. They all looked round suddenly.

S : I remember going to a butchers shop when I went out shopping with my m~ther, as a small boy. I would never go into a butcher'sif50,Iwould always wait outside. But I don't think I con~e'cted the meat which we had for dinner

S(ctd) : with the bleeding carcasses I'd seen hanging up inside the butcher~ shop. Especially when it came in the form of sausages or something like that, well, if we don't quite make the connection.

: Sometimes Saffron takes the twins in front of butcher~ shops; she takes her schoolmates in front of butcher~ shops as well. I think she regards it as her mission in life

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to take her mates out to butchers~ shops and lecture them

'TThis is what they're go~~gif to have for lunch't

~rl& : Actua+ly, Saffron has been very good in teaching them. Saffron's the principal, she's... where Noel if and I have to tread a bit delicately, Saffron can come down rather more firmly.

S : We~l, that's good, because it's the peer group, you see, which is better than if it's a sort of authority.

C~rJ& : Yes, it is actually. I noticed her lecturing Daniel about guns. That was a problem because all his little mates ha~ guns and my mother had said quite loudly: "If you don't buy that little boy a gun, then I willt." And, I mean, what do you do? You've got these conflicts, you've got ~o~if~~~~y situations one after the other.

S Mm. And here you are trying to keep the BifuddhiSt flag flying in the midst of it all. So it isn't easy to have a Buddhist family, it would seem from this if if discussion. It's not just a siniple matter, bifecause like any other kind of family, it's subject to all sorts of pressures from all sorts of quarters.

: I guess also when you're under pressure, you're(if)

S : But certainly a Buddhist family should be different from other families. That is to say, a family consisting of practising Buddhists should certainly be a different kind of family from one which does not consist of pra~tising Buddhists. And that, no doubt, is the meaning of 'Buddhist surroundings' in the mOst immediate SenSife. It could then be the Buddhist street or the Buddhist neighbourhood. "It is hard for such a one to come in contact with the Way." In contact with theifDharma. This also means -someth~ing more like: one's contact with the Dharma is something supremely important and supremely valuable. g5I't I suppose it is ifvery often in the West difficult even to come in contact with the Dharma, though less so than formerly. Nowadays you can come into contact with it in one way or another in almost any big city. You can certainly come in contact with Buddhist books.

You could say it's hard to qe in contact with members of the spiritual community.~hrough thifat contact that yo~ really contact the Dharma~if for a lot of p~~p~~~ifif

S : This reminds me of a little incident that happened when

S(ctd) : I was at the Hampstead Buddhist Vihara not very ~oifflg after return There was a young Buddhist staying there with me, helping with the coo~king and so on, and he used to answer the door when people came to see me. So quite a lot of people used to come and see me in that way, and I remember there was one young man that came, who afterwards became quite friendly* both with myself and with this other young man who was staying there who used to open the door. And then this other person, who used to open the door, said to me one day that he'd had a conversation with that young man with whom we'd both now become friendly, and this young man had said to him: "Do you know, when you opened the door of the Vihara, you were the first Buddhist I'd ever seen." And that young man said to me that he felt what a tremendous resp~~ibility this was: if that he was the first Buddhist that somebody had seen. He said he almost fell th~ough the floor with the shock of the sense of rep~sibility. That here they are, all keyed up, they've never been to a Buddhist place before. They've never been to a Buddhist Vihara, a Buddhist Centre and you are the first tif,~al, live Buddhist on whom they've set eyes. What may you happen to be doing? You may not be in a very good mood that day, or you may be picking your nose, or you may be doing almost anything, but it creates an impression, doesn't it? And that impression may stamp itself on that new person's mind for ever and ever, at least for years. I think people aren't sufficiently aware of that. When other people come to the Centre, yifo~ may be the first Buddhist that that new person has ever spoken to. There is the possibility that you have more influence on him, more effect on him* than any other Buddhist that he may meet for years ~if~dif~~~if~S if ~irst impressions are sometimes really decisive. And not only impressions about people, impressions about the ~entre, the general feel, the atmosphere, the look of the Centre, the way in which it is kept, all this is registering on that new person's consciousness. Maybe he's not aware of every- thing that he is registering, but there is an overall effect which is being produced, and probably the strongest part of that effect is you. Either speaking to him or not speaking to him; being friendly or not being friendly. Well, he's going to wildly generalise after meeting you, just you, one Buddhist. He's going to say either: Buddhists are very friendly people, eifr~Buddhists are really cold and stand-offish, etc. etc. He's going to see Buddhism, perhaps, in terms of you.

: Bhante, when I... one house I was living in in London, there was one pers6n who was a friend of the household whoMI'd heard about and she'd heard that I'd moved in 'ait ~~~tTif~~Buddh~5t) and she came to visit and she said: "Yes, you even look like a Buddhist"! Because she'd been in India, and I questioned her a bit about it and she said it was something to do with eyes and smile, which was rather nice...

S : Good, good.

~~visk : . . a sort of openness or something. I'd never thought that in some way we could look similar.

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S ; Well, I used to say, when I was in Kalimpong, thht I could recognise a Christian from his expression. if if Christian convert- even though he wore the same dress as other Nepalese~ etc~ etc. I used to claim to be able to recognise a Christian convert at sight* an~ I'm sure I could, because they had a sort of hang-d~"~~~xpression, which other Nepalese never had~ because the average Nepalese, whether Hindu or Buddhist, is a cheerful, pagan sort of person. But these converts always had what I can only describe as hang-dog expressions. They'd been made to feel guilty~ and Chriifstian missionaries talking to me used to complain that it's really difficult to make the converts feel guilty for their sins. And one woman in particular said: "Well, there's th~s wretched cook of mine. What do you think, but he's had an affair with that ~~~1if~~ the village and I&if~al~t0 him," she says,"so many times. I juSt can't make him realise it's a sin. I uan't make him feel guilty." And sometimes they did succeed in making their converts guilty, and it showed:~~ 1~oI &different look, different bearing. So correspondingly* presumably if you're a Buddhist in any real 5e~5~if it will show in some characteristic way or other, either by cheerfulness, hopefulness, tolerance, equanimity or whatever.

: A friend who visited the cafe once said: "The women there are~ so beautiful, they look so open." She was obviously very impressed by..

S : That's what my mother said when she visited the Centre. She said: "What a lot of pretty g~~~5if you've got here I think ~~if~ al~ost felt they had been sort of hand-picked.. ..' But no, they were just ordinary Buddhist girls. Anyway: "It is hard for such a one to come in contact with the Way." "It is hard for such a one," that is to say this hypothetical person, so to speak, "to cultivate faith in his mind." T%'at t'~ ~o S~~ ~ven supposing you are born as a human being, all your organs are intact, you're born into a central country, directly into Buddhist surroundings, you come into contact with the Way; even so, it is hard to cultivate faith im one's mind. What doeifS that mean? "To cultivate faith in one's mind"?

One's aspirations.

S : One's aspirations. But also perhaps confidence in oneself. I mean, it's not enoligh just to come into contact with the Dharma and have faith in that. You've also got to have faith in yourself, to be able to practise that Dharma and follow that Way, and that isn't quite so easy. It's not enough to come in~contact with all these wonderful Order Members, you've got to do something

your- self. You've got to have faith in your own mind, in your own capacity, your own potential.

That is hard. You can't put yourself into anything...

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: That actually denotes vision, doesn't it? Because to truly look at your own potential you've got to have something to sort of compare with?)

S . You've got to have something to have faith in, also, or else it'll be just a blind faith. It's more like confidence.

So you must have seen something to be confident about it or about you.

S : Well, I think that's also the important aspect of kalyana mitra ; that your kalyana mitras give you faith in yourself. They don't undermine your faith in yourself, they build it up, they contribute to it.

Is it just confidence in yourself that.

S . No, I think it's more than that. It's more than confidence in the ordinary sense. It's something more like consciousness of oneself as a spiritual being with a, so to speak, spiritual destiny. It's something more like that.

Is that vision? The first stage of the Eight-fold Path?

S I suppose it does involve, or imply, an element of vision, yes. But it's the consciousness of your own potential in a spiritual sense.

It's very interesting actually, because I had been if meditating for a while and going to the Centre, when people first started asking me why I did it and what I got out of it, the only thing that I could ~cifif~~~~y think of to say to anyone was that I'd got much more confident.

S . And did people notice the change? Yes.

S : Good. I think we see that with quite a few people, ~i~. When we've observed them ifp~~~~p5, or communicated with them over a period of a year or two, we ifsee definitely that they have more confidence, I mean among other things. Not in an overbearing, pushy sort of way, but juSt a quiet confidence. 'I Is the pr~cipal means of ifC(L(t'V~ting that confidence, ktsialcs if meditation~ the kalyana mitra system?

S : Not just the kalyana mitra system as such, but other people in general. And if the other people have genuine confidence in you, presuming your self-confidence to be a bit weak, it's much more easy for you to have

confidence in yourself. It's like when you learn to swim, when you learn to dive; if someone else says: "Come on, I'm sure you can do it," that~o~help you to feel that they've got confidence in you and that they know what they are talking about. Also, of course, you have to sort of dare yourself to do ~crv&tsi things, Perhaps you can do that with the help of your 'kalyana mitras'. And when you've dared yourself to do

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&~A ~cc~sni~eA tt'At ~vu1V~ 4ost ~~- S(ctd) : certain things and you have done themA well, obviously

that will build up your self-confidence.

: Do you think people lack confidence in themselves here more than in the East?

S : Well* when one says the East, presumably one is thinking more of India. I think Indians normally show an extra- ordinary degree of self-confidence. Especially in sort of social situations. With one important qualification - that is, with regard to the caste system. A lower- caste person will often show a marked lack of self-confidence if he is in a situation involving higher caste people. „~t leavi~n ... apart from that* within the peer group, usu ali~ e caste group, people have, I think, on the w~ 0 1 e,ao t of self-confidence. Possibly more, or very likely more, than people usually have in this country. I think jtif p~~~~~ifly has something to do with the extended family situation: that from childhood, from infancy in fact, they're very used to being handled by, or being in contact with, quite a large number of people and they are quite used to talking to them and going with them.

5~oca~~ Far more.

S : But, coming back to something we were saying about the Buddhist family, and speaking of the size of the family, could one perhaps say that a nuclear family is, to that extent, not a Buddhist family?

: In the narrow sense of inucleari, (abo~e)what is meant generally, yes, I think so. ~~~ougfrif a nuclear family ~o~sifn~~ ha~e to be a nuclear family.

S Right.

: I've met nuclear families that aren't nuclear. S : What do you mean by that?

: In that they're more outward-going.

S : You mean they've split the atom?

Cari~ : They all go in different directions!

S : But anyway, a nuclear Buddhist family is a contradiction in terms.

: ~general agreement)

: I think it's also something to do with being able to put people, well, in a way, to the test. It's like you have trust that if your parents are (really saying something?) they really do feel that, ~~~ than sort of losing faith in young people, whether it's a small family or extended. That gives you confidence.

S : Yes, you are not getting conflicting signals. I think in an Indian family it's probably correct to say

you're not getting one signal from father~~ and another signal from mother. Or even if you're getting slightly

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S(ctd) : different signals, they're complementary signals, they're not contradictory signals. You're getting, broadly speaking, the same signals from all the other older members of the family, with regard to type of behaviour, what is permitted and what is not permitted and so on.

Yes, it's more supportive, rather than....

: Not from lack of confidence, it's just lack of practice. I mean, one has to get the opportunity to practise what

ever it is; meeting people...

S : Yes, right, that Indians are quite noticeably uninhibited and unselfconscious when it comes to meeting new people. They'll come up to you and start talking without the least shyness or self-consciousness, in a way that doesn't very often happen in this country. It happens much more in the States, I believe - well, yes, I've experienced it.

Bhante, what do you think of the if "e~t~" type courses that seem designed to make people into very self-confident people?

S : I haven't heard of them, I'm sorry to say.

There's some courses run by someone called (if Wern~r Emhart?) where they get a lot of people into a hall together~ and they seem designed to make people self- confident, partly by teaching them that they're responsible for their surroundings, the situation, that seems in a very individualistic kind of way.

It's crash courses that take place over a weekend, it's sort of live-in and you don't leave the premises for that period of time. It's designed to sort of break a lot of stuff down~ I s~ppose.

S . Well, it may help with some people, I can't say.

You notice...

S . Hang on a miifnute! We'll carry on with the Bifodh1citta! Right. Anything more about faith in ifmindif?

I was going to ask if you noticed differences in self- confidence between men and women?

S : Well, D.H.Lawrence has got something to say about this. He?s got a little essay on what he calls 'cock-sureness' and 'hen-sureness'.

Oh, yes.

S : Different kinds of confidence in men and~woInen. He says that the cock-sureness of men is like that of the coc~el who crows loud and clear, p~ff~~~ifout his ch~~St~ififSt~~d~~~

tiptoe and challenging all the other coc~els in the neighbourhood. The confidence of the hen, he says, the confidence of the female, is the confidence of having laid an egg and knowing (it's the only thing they've got?)

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S(ctd) : So he makes this sort of distinction. I don't know whether you agree with that but it's a very amusing and interesting essay. I have a copy of it, if anyone would like to read it. So he speaks of 'cock-sure men' and 'hen- sure women'. It's a different kind of confidence, if you see what I mean. But what is confidence? It raises that question, doesn't it? What do we mean by confidence? I suppose it's (confidio?) with faith, having faith. Presumably faith in yourself.

Very clear; if

S . The capacity to repose faith in yourself.

El~te : Bhante, do you think the problem of isolation is a lack of confidence?

S . The problem of isolation. What do you mean by that? : You feel sort of

~ (end of %ThThe~oyie)~15:rt 0+ ~~IIaV~'o~ts in ~~ja' ~OL&r 1~~ o~ CQfl~id~ciL e~~c ap~rta~~ th W~ ~o~~i~~ ~,ts5'IVLi~ ttSt~ct o~r ra~e, (tjtrIct~ o~r Spircr~. : So, in some ways, to really experience your aloneness, your isolation, gives you confidence, rather than the other way around?

S . No,no. I think Els~ was speaking of the sort of person who cuts himself, or cuts herself, off. You restrict yourself to the narrower, safer~ situation within which you won't be tested. If you're fearful, if you lack self-confidence with regard if to the wider sphere, the wider range of activities, you'll just keep yourself restricted.

: Perhaps I was jumping...

S . But then* on the other hand, it sometimes can hap?efl, as on solitary retreat, that when you cut yourself off from extraneous influences, you e~xperience yourself more powerfully. You can also exper0~ence your confidence in your5ifelf more strongly, this isL~ue. But that self- confidence has basically to be there before it is possible for you to experience that when you do happen to be in solitude.

: What about that f~~lingft of really intense aloneness that in some ways seems to be part of developing; realising your own separateness somehow?

S : Well, I think it's realistic, because in a way you are alone. Even your best friend can't completely enter into yOu~if tho~ghts and feelings. No one knows how you feel as well as you do yourself, however much they may empathise with you. You can't really, so to speak, on that mundane level, bridge the gap between you and the other. That simply is not possible. So there must be a feeling or experience of loneliness or isolation in every thinking or reflecting person. There cannot but be, because yow are alone.

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I find that the fear of that, not the actual experience of it; the actual experience Of it is fine,but it's the fear of that~that~sometimes is a great problem.

S . But what is one afraid of when one~S afraid of being alone* when one is in f7ct alone?

Visually it comes as a feeling of plunging in a black hole. Just nothing.

S : It's as though you've nothing to feel yourself against, nothing to test yourself against. You have to, as it were, push against the wall if ~ ~ fl SO ~. c ~ his is me pushing.' If there's nothing to push against, if there's no wall there, no object, no other, you don't experience yourself so strongly.

: Where do you think that comes from? I mean besides..

S . Well, one might say the nature of the human situation itself. It doesn't come from anywhere, as it were, to you; that is you. You are an individual, self-conscious being. So ~ where there is individual self-conscious being, there must necessarily be that sense or feeling or consciousness of loneliness or isolation.

TriL ~ : That really intense feeling; I wondered if that was connected to, perhaps, the Bardo state somehow?

S : It could be, because in the case of the Bardo state, you haven't even got the comfortable human body to hang on to or to identify yourself with, you're just a sort of naked consciousness if, as it were. So, yes, there could be some reminiscence of that state. That is possible.

: Would metta be one of the antidotes ~ sort of balance?

S : Well, when one speaks in terms of an antidote, one is thinking of the condition as a disease, but if is that necessarily so? Is it something that you need an anti-dote for?

~Th~s~ : A sort of counter-balance, I mean.

S : Well, you can't counter-balance ~ ~ because one counter-balances with an opposite. So what is the opposite of that feeling of isolation? It's a feeling of togetherness, but can there be a sense of togetherness which c ~ ~ pl ~ t ~ if l y bridges the gap between the self and the other? You can only bridge that gap, in a manner of speaking, by breaking through the subject/object ~ the self/other ~ duality completely. There's no solution to the problem of loneliness or isolation on the level of consciousness on which one experiences oneself as a separate self-conscious individual. On that level this problem is insoluble, it always remains.

So to experience. .

S : But you can come very close to some other person, but you can only keep it up for so long. it's a bit of an
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S(ctd) : illusion, anyway. After a while, whether physically or mentally or emotionally, you separate; on your own again. You may be left with a nice, warm, comfortable feeling for a while; but that will wear off unless the experience is renewed. You can't permanently overcome your sense of isolation in that sort of way. You can only overcome the sense of isolation permanently by breaking through the subject/object duality itself, which only comes with Insight. Or, putting it in other terms, with the actual arising of the Bodhicitta, which is a transcendental experience. So I think, on the mundane level, we have to accept isolation and not try to run away from it; understand the situation and understand that the only real solution of the problem of loneliness and isolation is to break through that subject/object duality. Sometimes you can a little with other people. It's as though - you haven't really broken through, but if you think of there being a sort of veil between you and the other person, sometimes it seems as though that veil was a bit more transparent than usual. Sometimes that does happen, but it doesn't last for very long, usually. So, still the only permanent solution is to do away with the veil altogether. To realise the non-duality, basically, of subject/object, which is a very easy thing to say, very easily pronounced, but it isn't so easy because it involves the development of Insight, with a capital 'I'. But sometimes one has a little glimpse of that, as though there's, just for an instant perhaps, no longer just self and other, but there's something else, something quite different which transcends them both. Anyway, the next saying is actually on Bodhi heart or Bodhicitta. "It is hard for such a one to attain to the Bodhi-heart," that is to say, the Bodhicitta. Well, it's hard, it's even more rare, even more precious because it is a transcendental experience. Technically, in traditional terms, the Bodhicitta arises when the Bodhisattva takes the vow to gain Enlightenment, not for his own sake only, but for the sake of other living beings. Well, those are the words in which it's expressed, but it doesn't mean literally that: - 'Here am I a real, separate, individual being; here are others, real, separate, individual human beings, and I am going to save not just me, but them also, all of us together as separate sort of individuals.' No, it doesn't mean that at all. It means you aspire to operate in a dimension or the level where that sort of distinction is no longer recognised. But so far as people are concerned who are still under the influence of that way of looking at it, it seems - that you, the Bodhisattva, are functioning in this sort of compassionate manner; trying to gain Enlightenment for self as well as others. In other words, the Bodhisattva is not trying to gain Enlightenment for himself plus others, it is rather he does not see a distinction between himself and others. He really, genuinely sees no distinction between working for his own Enlightenment and working for that of others, because he sees this distinction as not ultimate. He's just trying to remove the suffering, whoever that

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S(ctd) : suffering happens to be attached to; whether himself or others, it really makes no difference to him. He's just trying to get rid of whatever suffering there is in the Universe.

Eve : So, is he doing that from a basis of, like a transcendental experience of

non-duality as being,

like that is the basis from which he's...

-S : Well, it cannot be from any other basis, if it is a real arising of the Bodhicitta, as distinct from an intellectual understanding and a willed effort to put that idea into practice. You can try to behave like a Bodhisattva without the Bodhicitta actually having arisen, and if you do that, well, that will help prepare the ground for the actual arising of the Bodhicitta. This is what I've called, I don't know if it was in this group or the other group, the effective arising of the Bodhicitta, as distinct from the real arising of the Bodhicitta; corresponding to effective Going For Refuge, as distinct from real Going For Refuge. So, in the light of the Bodhisattva Ideal, in the light of the arising of the Bodhicitta, there shouldn't really be any conflict between one's own interests and those of others. And clearly this is a conflict which often arises in the spiritual life, just because one is still on the level of dualism to? feeling a difference between one's interests, whether spiritual or otherwise. To what extent, But at some time does come when, with the arising of the Bodhicitta, one no longer feels that sort of division, therefore no longer feels that sort of conflict. There's no longer a conflict in terms of: - 'Shall I work for the good of others, or shall I work for my own good?' They really have become one and the same thing. So there's no tension, no conflict. If it was a question of: 'Shall I pack some more beans in the co-op or shall I meditate?' there isn't that sort of conflict. You really don't feel any difference between what you do for others, so to speak, and what you do for yourself. Clearly this is not an easy state to attain, but at least one can see the possibility of it.

Eve : Setting up the conditions for the Bodhicitta to arise doesn't necessarily mean that it will arise, does it? I mean it's not a guaranteed sort of...

S : No, in the sense there's nothing mechanical about it. But no, maybe one could put it this way; that if you set up the right conditions, yes, the Bodhicitta must appear. But it's very difficult to tell, when you're actually in the process of setting up those conditions, at exactly which point, exactly how much effort, how much setting up conditions is required. That you don't know, because you don't know your previous karma, you don't know what hindrances there might be deep down in you or you may not know what your previous spiritual experiences might have been.

Carla : You go into it very carefully, I think it's the second tape of 'The Bodhisattva Ideal', where you talk about

Shantideva and (Vajrapada?)...

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S : Vasubandhu. There's something about it in 'The Survey' too, yes. I

spoke, for INStfl~Ca ~bout the Seven-fold Puja as a foundation. So one might say: how many times do I have to say, repeat the Seven fold Puja before the Bodhicitta arises? So I might say: - ~f you repeat it sincerely and go on repeating it the Bodhicitta will arise in the end. But whether you have to repeat it a hundred thousand times or ten million or a hundred million, I can't say But if you go on repeating the Sevenfold Puja, a time will come, a point will come, when the Bodhicitta arises, ~ssuming you are doing it, of course, with full sincerity, with the whole of your being. Because I don't know what residues of good or bad karma you may have, or even with what degree of energy you may repeat that Seven-fold Puja. Anyway, we move on to something more. The last saying under this section is: "It is hard for such a one to attain to (the state where) nothing is practised and nothing manifested." Footnote: "see note on paragraph three." Well, we've come across this before. This is a Zen touch which one can make of what one may: "(The state where) nothing is practised and nothing manifested."

~rt'stine : () inspiring in the same way as talking about the arising of the Bodhi heart. For me anyway....

S . Well, perhaps the arising of the Bodhicitta is sufficiently advanced. This is way beyond altogether. That to such an extent that these words really are very little more than words, so far as we're concerned. 7},ay refer to something quite unimaginable.

Sometimes you can feel there is a sort of fullness; that in a way there isn't anything else. (Can entity?)

But if there's still the fullness in you, then it's not that.

S : If it was the real fullness there wouldn't be ~> 'you' t~c to make that statement. Alright, let's go on to 37.

"The Buddha said: "A disciple living thousands of miles away from me will, if he constantly cherishes and ponders on my precepts, attain the fruit (of studying) the Way: but one who is in immediate contact with me, though he sees me constantly, will ultimately fail to do so if he does not follow my precepts."

T

S : So what is the principle inculcated here? Do it: It's by your own effort.

S ; Yes, but not just by effort. It's a bit more than that. Something to do with being in the company of the Buddha. q~ttow' of rJk~ ~t M~ns to b~ ~itt ~~~a\$~ q V;~e (S'L~~~~,

S(ctd) : It doesn't mean just being physically in his company, grasping hold of his robe, as' it says in another passage. To be in the company of the Buddha really means to be practising Mf~ Teaching. What does it matter, I mean, what is the value of sitting near him, if you're disregarding the Teaching? And in the same way, if you're really practising the Teaching you are, as it were, in the presence of the Buddha. You are coming nearer, so to speak, to the Buddha within you. There's no possibility of your basking in the reflected glory of the Buddha. Yes, some people do think like that. If you're h-anging around the Dalai Lama, well, there must be something specially holy about you. Almost as if you expect some of his holiness to rub off on~you.

-l~ite a lot of spiritual teachers, th0~AAo encourage that sort of thing. Like Guru ~~?'~ra~.

S : Well, one must no doubt distinguish between genuine, what is called (satsan?), definitely enjoying the spiritual company of the teacher in a genuine way, being receptive and learning- otistinguish that from what I call just hanging around the teacher, sort of appearing to be there, being there sort of physically speaking, but not being anywhere near the teacher's spirit.

~~tpiasi~: It does make a distinction, doesn't it? That if you see the Buddha constantly you will fail to attain the Truth if you don't follow the precepts. It doesn't say, well, it doesn't matter one way or the other.

S . Right. Yes, yes.

~~t you can lose all that advantage if you're not actually practising.

S : Well, you can have, say, a wrong idea about the teacher.. You can see him, not as a spiritual teacher, but as a very powerful figure and you may want to be around him for that reason. I re-member I discussed this sort of question years ago with Dardo Rinpoche in ~alimpong and we discussed it ~ propos of the Dalai Lama. And the question I raised was, well, how does it come about that the Dalai Lama appears to be surrounded by so many unspiritual people? And he said: "Well, you know, in Tibet it's like that." He said, the bigger the lama, the bigger the rascals by who'm h~-s surrounded. Because a big lama there is not just a~~piritual figure. He's got a certain amount of worldly authority, even money, reputation. So there are many people who come to him and even stay with him and are part of his entourage, who are not really drawn to him for spiritual reasons, but want to sh~~ in that worldly glory, which happens to go along wjth£Spiritual prestige. So therefore, the bigger the lama, well, the more the prestige, the more the wealth even,. and therefore the bigger the rascals who are attracted. So I, at that time, in my nai'vety, I imagined that the greater the lama, the more spiritual will be the people by whom he is surrounded. But apparently it doesn't

work out like that.

It must be difficult for the man.

S . Yes, indeed, because if he is really a genuinely spiritual figure, as well as having all the other influence and prestige, he must very often know what is going on, but might find it difficult to do anything about it.

Was Tomo Geshe surrounded by so many?

S : No, he was hardly surrounded by anybody. He seemed to keep people rather at a distance. They were a bit afraid of him, I found, for 'some mysterious reason. He was only a very little chap, about so high, but very strange, very remote, very mysterious. He didn't have that much of an entourage. When I knew him he was quite young, soon after he came out of Tibet. Yes, he was really very strange. He used to have lots of dogs and cats and he used to spend more time with them, I think, than with people: He was very fond of little animals. A lot of the lamas are. I don't know whether it's their frustrated paternal instincts or anything like that, but a lot of them keep little dogs and cats, especially little dogs, little toy dogs. Dardo Rinpoche has lots of them. Even though he's got two hundred and fifty children to look after at the same time. And he also used to keep birds.

: Teaching them mantras.

S : Yes, yes. He had a m~~,~ that could say 'Om Mani Padme Hum' ! He would only say it for Rinpoche. Rinpoche used to go up to his cage and he'd say: 'Myn~a, Om Mani Padme Hum?' and the myn~A would go: 'Om Mani Padme Hum'~ And Dardo Rinpoche would give him a grape or something. So even great lamas have this human side. I noticed that many of them were very fond of animals and liked to keep pets. ~o"C But in the case of these prominent spiritual or pseudo-spiritual figures that you sometimes see in the West, there's so much to be done in the way of organising and arranging~ and sometimes spiritually-minded people w'on't be interested in that, or won't be very good at it. So the spiritual~~pseudo-spiritual figures will tend to attract or even~ need quite worldly, capable people, who are in~it, not so much for spiritual reasons, but for quite worldly reasons. Even assuming, say, that the Pope is a spiritual figure; a pretty big assumption. But, anyway, assuming that he's a spiritual figure, well, he's surrounded by his Secretariat, his Curia his court, his cardinals, most of whom aren't 'spiritual figures, they're career diplomats, from the Vatican to international diplomatic circles. They are V~worldly gentlemen, ost 9atk'ars. They're interested in things like diplomacy, high finance, banking and (~,~, s?) and shares, administration and all the rest of it. They did their religious studies years and years ago and have forgotten them since. So this~emphasise\$ the fact that it's important to see~ s~~ the spiritual teacher as a spiritual teacher. Not to be misled by any sort of worldly power or prestige which he possesses in addition to that, and not allow ourselves to be drawn to him for those sort of reasons rather than

S(ctd) : for the spiritual reasons, otherwise one won't really be in his presence, one won't really be a disciple.

(coffee break!)

S : I find logic quite helpful, even though logic has its limitations. I used to teach logic when I was in Kalimpong. I had classes of students who were asking logic for Intermediate Arts and BA and it was quite amusing. Because, well, formal logic is said to be outdated and maybe it is in some ways, but it certainly gives the brain a bit of exercise. It certainly enables you to make distinctions and detect fallacies or to understand how there can be such a thing as a fallacy in reasoning. - In inductive logic, one of the very interesting and useful things one can study is the nature of evidence, the nature of proof.

It's also difficult if you say something and people haven't heard it. They put in words that you haven't said, because it's automatic.

S : They just mishear what you say.

I think geometry is a nice thing to study actually, thinking in terms of how things fit together in groups and so on.

S : Well, you can have (a quite interesting?) time just discussing whether, for instance, a line really is the shortest distance between two points, because that has been doubted, hasn't it? Because there are alternative systems - non-Euclidean geometry. According to Einstein, apparently I can't tell you how this conclusion is arrived at but it is said that, according to Einstein, a line is not the shortest distance between two points.

Because a line is never straight. A line is never straight, it's always curved.

S : Well, it's a hypothetical line between two hypothetical points and is hypothetically straight. We are not concerned in geometry with actual lines. But clarity (general laughter) is so rare and to some extent it does depend on the correct definition of terms. It's a well-known experience to be arguing with someone, discussing something with someone, and you and he are using the same terms in completely different senses. So you must first of all define your terms; this is as old as Socrates. But people still haven't really learned the lesson.

~(oca-o~ Rather like a game, when you have to learn the rules first before you move in to play.

S : Yes. Just to indicate people's lack of intellectual sophistication, I've found one of the things that people find very hard to understand is connected with translation from one

language to another. It's very difficult for people to understand that when you

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S(ctd) : translate from one language to another, a word which you use, say, in English to translate a word, say, in Sanskrit, does not have exactly the same connotations. So that you must not associate the connotations of the English word with the original Pali or Sanskrit word. Much less still must you reason from connotations in the word to the translation to a conclusion pertaining to the word itself, so to speak, in the original language. In other words, people find it quite difficult to understand the nature of the distinction between languages. But you see the sort of thing I mean? I can't at the moment think of an example.

Metta? Metta and love? and /overt, S . Yes, one could say that, though it's not a very obvious example.

'Dana' and giving? 'Dana' and giving, because 'dana' has got a whole range of qualities 'that ~;giving' can never express, etc. ? S : Yes, but it's not even quite like that. For instance, put it this way,--supposing you translate a certain Sanskrit word by a certain English word and the English word has got a certain etymology, and you reason from that etymology of the English word in the translation about the meaning of the original Sanskrit word, when the original Sanskrit word doesn't have that etymology at all. But you are unable to understand that you are not dealing with the same thing, in a way. For instance-maybe this will do as an example-suppose you translate 'dharma' by ~religion~. Well, religion means ~,religare~, to bind back. You say, ah, when the Buddha was talking about the Dharma he meant a binding back to the truth. You see what I mean? Whereas the word 'dharma' itself, the etymology, has got nothing to do with binding back. But you transfer the etymology of the English word, actually Latin word, to the original Sanskrit word.

Some of the translations have words like this, it seems. I can't give an example.

S : But you see what happens here? That sort of confusion. If you point this out to some people, they just can't see the point of it, they can't see what you're getting at. Because they so identify the word in the original and the word in the translation, as though the etymology of one is automatically the etymology of the other. Which is of course not the case, or not necessarily the case. So this gives rise to a great deal of confusion.

: Languages are so conceptually very different. For instance the American Navaho language, when you say a word there, it also means.. well, 'tree' is the most obvious word. The word 'tree' means not just tree, as we think. We think of the part above the ground and the branches and leaves. But the tree in the American Navaho language means birds' nests, birds, roots, the sky and space within the tree, the whole works., So when they use the word tree, they see a totally different

(ctd) : kind of thing we see. And if you notice that painters who painted within that tradition, you will always see the roots of the tree, as well as the tree. People from that tradition, you don't get 'just this kind of thing above the earth, you get the roots looking like branches, but underneath. It's very different perceptually.

S . So, if you were speaking of cutting down a tree, it would mean something different for a person using that kind of language.

: Yes, it would mean it wouldn't be the same at all.

S : Anyway, one of the things that can contribute to clearer thinking is a greater awareness of the meaning of words, even the limitations of words and so on. Because some people, who are quite, as it were, unsophisticated, will often think that this concern about what do you mean by such and such word is really quite ridiculous. They assume, well, everybody knows what that word means, I know what that word means, etc. etc. So they regard any sort of question about the meaning of the word they use just as a sort of ploy in the argument, just intended to confuse the issue. They say, well, love is love; everybody knows what love is.

: Children, especially, seem to be worried about the actual meaning of words. If we use them in different

contexts, we get misunderstood.

they are very concerned to know what exactly people mean by that word

Is there a dictionary, an etymological one that's possible to get?

S . Well, there are etymological dictionaries. My big four-volume dictionary gives etymologies. And of course, the twelve-volume Oxford one which also has in two bi-volume sets that gives etymologies. But if you're especially interested, you should get a, what we call an etymological dictionary, which is small, like an ordinary dictionary, but which gives etymologies in more detail than ordinary dictionaries usually do. I think it's very interesting. I often do this in lectures, you might have noticed, tracing the etymology of the word, to throw some light on its meaning. I don't know whether it was this group or the other we discussed - no, it was the other one - of the word 'man'; because Gampopa gives an etymology of the word 'purisa' which is really interesting. 'Purisa', which means man in the sense of human being, according to Gampopa has the etymology of being derived from a root meaning 'power' or 'capacity'. So, a 'purisa', a man, is one, a being, with the capacity to develop, to attain higher levels of existence. So that throws great light, one might say, on how ancient Indian man thought of man. Thought of man, that is to say, as an essentially evolving being, as we would say. One possessed of the power to attain higher states. Usually 'man' in English and in German, Dutch and so on, is considered as probably

connected with mind. Nan is~one who thinks, the one who

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S(ctd) : has mind, who has consciousness. You see there's a different idea behind the word. You see the difference?

~ri~k : It must help to speak another language.

S : Yes, it makes you more aware of the relative, even limited, nature of your own language. Because if you speak another language, you come to realise there are certain things you can't say in one language which you can say in another. A certain finer shade of meaning, which is quite untranslatable.

So is that what you meant by saying if you study together, words have a resonance' b.~O~o~t~~r~t~~~~&t~?

S : No, I was really referring to the logical distinction between denotation and connotation. Here again, logic is very helpful. Are you familiar with this distinction?

Yes.

S : Denotation and connotation. Denotation means the literal meaning, as it were, and connotation covers all the associations which have come to be regarded as part of the meaning. I'll see if I can give you an example. For instance, if you say 'baby', what is the denotation of the term 'baby'? 'Baby' means an infant of the human species; but what is the connotation of the term? Small and weak, prone to tears, immature, do you see what I mean? Those are all the connotations of that term. When you say, oh, he's just a big baby., you are not using the term in the literal sense, you are not referring to the denotation of the term, but to its connotation.

: Some people use the word 'woman' like that.

S : That's right. Yes. 'Oh~ don't be a woman. They don't mean, don't be a female of the human species', no they mean, don't be silly, don't be hysterical, etc. etc.. So the connotation may be very different from the denotation of the term. So it's the connotation that contains what I've called the 'resonance.' Some times the connotation can be quite extensive or rich or ambiguous even.

~eer) : Not always~, what's the word?

S : Pejorative. No, by no means, no.

: This is where people often get misunderstandings with the use of the word.

S : Yes. So if words had only denotation and no connotation, poetry, for instance, would be quite impossible. When we use language as it were scientifically, we try to avoid using terms in their connotative sense and only in their 'denotative sense. So the more scientific language becomes, the more limited, the more precise, but the less

evocative, the less resonant. Although of course, for some people, though it is evocative and full of resonance, they are using it in an unscientific way. 'Oh, Buddhism is very scientific,' someone says. Well,

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S(ctd) : they are using the word in a highly emotive sense. They are attaching a vast connotation to it.

It's the orientation of the person listening as well. Because if you read something scientific and you're not in that particular area, you'll read all sorts of things into it, because you're not taking the words precisely.

S : And also, for instance, if you are a scientist and you're reading a piece of poetry, 'Oh what a lot of nonsense, there's no clear, precise meaning here,' because it's all connotation, or predominantly connotation and very little denotation. So the scientist will think this is all rather pointless, it isn't really saying anything, it's not making any scientific statement. And of course, it isn't, because it isn't intending to.

It's all to do with receptivity, isn't it? You know, if you're tuned in to a particular

(end of tape)

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S(ctd) : Towards the end of his life, after a lifetime of scientific research, he took up, say, Shakespeare and other poets he'd enjoyed as a young man. And he found he was totally unable to appreciate them, they just didn't mean anything any more, and he was rather sorry for this.

S-Io-all: So, it depends what you mean by a scientist, because they're often not very

scientific if... I mean

S . Are you using scientific in a denotative or~connotative sense?

: A pejorative sense! Well, ~ (No, no) Some people~ , consider it

5kIQ~~~ : Well, we haven't defined the word scientist, that's the unfortunate thing.

: I think we were switching round connotations and denotations in that conversation.

Yes, well, what I meant was that ~t~ 5 assumed that every scientist or someone who's called a scientist, has scientific thinking or whatever is meant by that,~~ ~c~~c'i-

S : Well, one might say you can't be a scientist without at least a certain amount of scientific thinking.

: I would have thought it meant somebody who's operating in a scientific mode.

Suioe~~~ . Yes, but I mean when they want to analyse something and they forget that the consciousness analysing it has to be taken into consideration, that's very unscientific. And so they're not really being scientific in the true...

S : Well, what you're really saying, I'm afraid, is that science is not possible! Which some people do now say, that the scientist is not r~ly scientific, he's only pseudo-scientific because he's trying to leave out of his calculations what cannot be left out, namely him- self. So that would be, maybe, Blake's point of view, as against, say, Locke or Newton or Bacon. That science in that sense is really a human impossibility, though people try to make it a possibility.

: It's certainly become much, much less so I think.

S . Yes. I think scientists now realise this quite well, ~nd are beginning to allow for it, at least to an extent.

~aritnt : In a way~~ you've got to have gone through that process before you can actually realise that.

S : Yes. I think a scientist can prob~y be defined as

one who makes use of the scientific method. But he may not make use of that exclusively, he

may have recourse to intuition, for instance.

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~rtst, : Well, the really good scientists are the ones that can

S . The creative scientists are those with a strong element of intuition as well, it seems.

: But that would be when you're deciding what you wanted to test, wouldn't it? That you wouldn't use that...

S : Yes, when you formulate your hypothesis, there a great deal of imagination even, may come in, but if you want to verify your hypothesis you have to follow strictly scientific procedures, otherwise your results are not regarded as science. Science is not a hypothesis, well, hypotheses are not science, are not even scientific. I mean hypotheses become, what shall we say, laws only when they've been sufficiently verified.

: And they're only true in the absence of evidence to the contrary

Yes.

S : So even when verified, the resulting law is still provisional; because it's said even, for instance, Newtonian physics is now superseded, so we are told, I don't know the details but we're assured that Newton's work has been superseded by Einstein. There's even a suspicion now that Einstein has been superseded. Anyway, that's a bit of a digression, isn't it? But it grows out of this need for clearer thinking, a closer definition of terms, understanding the meaning of the actual words you're using and whether you're using them in a, so to speak, strict scientific literal sense or whether you're using them mor~, so to speak, poetically or metaphorically. I think very often we don't realise our language is highly metaphoricai. There used to be someone on the radio, some of you may be old enough to have heard your parents talking about him, called Professor Jo~~. \$ C. ~. r4. ~o~~ RcaAu ~n at 5trkbecic ~Ltc~~,~on~on rw~

I've heard of him. ~o~u~ar press du66ed ~j*~ <~ro~s~orJ4

S : Ah, you've heard of him.) What was it he used to appear on, 'The Brains Trust', on the radio? And he used to annoy quite a lot of people in the course of discussion by always asking, 'What do you mean by that word?' Yes? It became almost his sort of signature tune, 'What do you mean by that word?' But he did, I mean he was a professor of philosophy at London University, he did, strange to say, inculcate a sort of awareness that

one didn't always fully understand the meaning of the words that one used, practically through the whole nation! It was almost as though that was his mission in life, to remind people, or rather to ask them what really were the meanings of the words that they used. And they sometimes used to get quite irritated when Professor J0oa, used to ask them, 'Well,

what do you mean by that?'~ He was especially well-known as a moral philosopher and he came to an unfortunate end. I think this is

~ ['it a~~~~ ~hAt ~o', ~~~ . JJ

S of 42 5 37 D9 T2 3 S(ctd) : why I.... S~lo~w~ : Yes, ~ f&~ta°i~tr.

S : Yes? He was caught travelling on the Underground without a ticket and that was the end of his career. The great British public being the virtuous~rca~~r~~s&p~~i'c that it is, that was that. It raily brought his career to an end, and very little was heard of Professor J~oao(after that. Whereas he'd been a national figure before. ~~ When I went to India, well at that time Professor Joa~ was a sort of star in the family, but when I came back and enquired, 'where is this star?' I was informed that the star had fallen.

It was Professor Ayer then.

S : Yes, but Professor Ayer had nothing like the celebrity that Professor ~Jo~O(had. Professor .Jo~ac was a household figure, a household name, and he was famous for repeatedly asking this sort of question, 'Well, what do you mean? What does that word mean?' So I think he did quite a bit to educate the great British public in these matters. And probably they need a few more lessons now. Anyway, on to 38.

'The Buddha said to a Sramana: "How long,, is the span of

a man's life?" "It is but a few ays, was the answer. The Buddha said: "You have not understood," and asked another Sramana, who replied: "It is(like) the time taken to eat (a single meal)." To this the Buddha replied in the same way and asked a third: "H~ow long is the span of a man's life?" "It is (like) the time taken by a (single) breath," was the reply. "Excellent," said the Buddha, "You understand the Way."

S : Mm. What is the point of this little anecdote?

Is he saying that it's only the present that actually exists? Yes?~~tVh~4tS ' S : too. But I mean the original question is: 'How long is the span of a man S life?' That is to say, how long can you expect to live? How long can you really expect to live? Can you really expect to live three score years and ten? ~ven though that is the average length of human life, ~an you be absolutely certain that you're going to live to be threescore years and ten? Can you be absolutely certain you're going to live even a few days?

: So you can only live as long as your next breath.

S : Yes, yes. That's all you can be sure of. Yes? So your life is really only as long as a breath, that's all you can really look forward to, maybe not even a full breath. Well, you could have a heart attack or something like that. You could just drop dead. So that's the span of a man's life, that's how long it is. It's very easy to assume you're going to have so

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S(ctd) : many more years, so many more decades. You don't really know. I mean you have that sort of animal confidence just because you are alive~ I think I've said before, more than once, that when you're young.-I certainly remember this from my own experience-it's really very difficult for you to think in terms of dying. It's so... you feel so much alive, the idea of death is so unreal. I mean it's even difficult enough to imagine yourself growing old, you can't even imagine that really~ because you experience your life and your youth and vigour and health so strongly. It's natural that you should. I think it's very difficult. I think I have said once that I remember quite clearly the occasion on which the idea that I myself would definitely die one day really struck me. This didn't happen until I was about 35 or so, and it was when I heard somebody else giving a talk about recollection of death~ and it only really struck me then3 even though I'd given talks about death myself before that, and yes, I'd certainly understood it, but it didn't really hit me, so to speak, that I was going to die until about that time. And it doesn't. When you're young it's very difficult for you really to see that and to feel it unless you're spiritually gifted in a quite exceptional sort of way. So it's very difficult for you to sort of not act on the assumption that you've got years and years and decades and decades ahead. That's the natural sort of state of affairs. Perhaps it's just as well, from a biological point of view, that it should be so. Otherwise you wouldn't do anything, you wouldn't have children, you wouldn't do anything of that sort. If you have too strong an awareness of the shortness of human life, it can have a quite inhibiting sort of effect on your activities. So when you're young in a way you can't afford, from a biological point of view, to have that consciousness too strongly.

: But a sense of urgency really helps when you're trying to develop; doc~n't ~t1.

S : But perhaps one can develop that, sense of urgency in other ways. Well, just that it S intrinsically good to evolve-well, ~~ there is this sort of treasure within reach~ why not put your hand out and grasp it now? Why postpone it? You'll be the loser. I think one must be careful about having (opened?) this topic of the shortness of the span of man's life~ it could, under certain circumstances, just give rise to cynicism, rather than act as a source of inspiration or give one urgency.

How would it give rise to cynicism?

S : Well, 'Life is so short, what's the use of doing any- thing with it?' 'Eat, drink, and be merry, tomorrow you die.'

° I think it only works to be aware of (the possibility of a very short life?) if you've got a very definite path

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(ctd) : that you' 4e decided on to follow. Because other- wise, I mean I've seen people getting very... I mean quite desperate, actually, by the idea that their life is very short and they know they want to do something with it, but they haven't found what.

S . ~ybe it's quite a useful little sort of exercise to ask oneself sometimes: supposing I was told, for any reason,~I'd only three months to live, what would I do? How would I spend those three months? If you could answer honestly, it would probably tell you quite a lot about yourself. Would you go on a wild spree? Or would you go on a meditation retreat? Or would you write your memoirs? Or would you go and see all your friends? What would you do if you just had three months left? Different people would give very different replies no doubt.

: ~a ~c~rt ~i~ Di t~~ ~\$ was told he had leprosy and he wouldnD#~b~eJLiL~i ver~ he organised his affairs and~~ t §~~~o~~ry%~o~~n~~~ ~n order~ parted with his family and his wife and went off to a .or went and took up a .. or went to a teacher and asked for a practice an 6~~ent to a cave. He'd arranged he had a brick wall built over the face of the cave, he'd arranged to have one person from his family, which was quite a distance away,several miles, bring him food every day and provide.. .and take care of the estate and take care of his family. And he sat there and meditated for years~ and finally one day, Oh the wall was chipping away by this time, and he noticed the wall was coming down, so he came out and he saw a lake, a pool of water not far from him, so he went over and he looked and he was perfectly alright. But by this time he'd been away for so long, when he thought what he wanted to do, he didn't want to go home any more. He went back to the teacher for another teaching. It was quite a moving tale. It was Alexandra David-Neel that told it in one of her books.

S . Well, that must have been some Bodhisattva' s skilful means.

: I think it's very sad, in a way, that in our modern times, in hospitals sometimes doctors know that some- one hasn't got very long to live, they don't actually tell them, not always. I think it would be quite good to give them time to prepare themselves for death. Often the person suspects something like that but are not quite sure about ~t) and if somebody did tell them that it would give them time to prepare themselves for death.

S . If they knew how to do that. A lot of people nowadays unfortunately don't know. It's - more than just getting used to the idea that you're going to die soon. And a lot of people are no longer in touch with a spiritual tradition, just don't know what to do when that time comes.

What would you do in those circumstances?

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S of 42 S 38 D9 T2 6 S : Which circumstances?

If you were told you definitely only had three months to live?

S : That's quite difficult to say. I think I'd ~v~~ to think about what would happen

to the FWBO and make provisions accordingly. I think this is what I'd spend my time doing. Have a last tour of Centres and give my last words of advice> ~aybe give my last poetry reading or something like that.

S~ocf~a: Very often doctors can be wrong, can't they?

They often are!

S : Well, that's maybe why they're reluctant to tell you that you're dying, in case you're not.

S~ocf~ : And sometimes it seems to have a bad effect on someone.

S : Well, I think one can at least give a hint or a warning that... to someone, well, it would be better if you just started preparing yourself, because you may die, you may not live very much longer. I think one could at least say that. Give some inklin~. Certainly not encourage the person to entertain false hopes. Just with a few cheerful words: tOh, you'll be alright, you'll be on your feet in ~few more ~e~~~1 When really the doctor believes that that person hasn't got much longer to live and will never get up from the bed again.

: It's been very interesting knocking on doors to get signatures for the Peace Movement because, well, my son called himself the angel of death, it really sort of frightens people to suddenly realise that there's a possibility of an atomic ~pI~s'iort.

(l&r~en~: Sometimes ~~~ s not just doctors that... well, my aunt's doing this to her husband. He has cancer and she won't let anyone tell him. I really think it's awful.

S : Was it in this study group we were talking about the traditional Chinese attitude towards death? The old grandfather ordering his own coffin and sleeping in it in the sitting room and showing it to visitors. It's a quite different attitude.

: I remember when I was a little girl my granny used to tell me about... she always reminded me about death. She would sort of walk along the road and she would point out to me: See this butterfly? You'll be like that one day."

S : Did she mean reborn as a butterfly?

No, she meant that I would be dead and she actually explained what j~)S~~'-t~a((~, and it just sort of makes me feel very sad~ that images . It just... and I began question~ng quite a lot about death at about the age of ten and it got me into a very sort

3~7

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(ctd) : depressed ~ta?~: tWhy is this? Why can't (~~~) and my father says:' ~Oh, don't have such a bad sort of view about death. () you'll be a god (sometimes 1~ °) Because they talk about immortals and things like that as well. I remember thinking quite a

lot about death.

S : Did you want to be an immortal?

No. I meant, at that time when my father told me about that, I was really delighted. I said:
~Oh, it would be nice, sort of moving around in space and in the sky,~ but then, no, I don't think so.

S : Anyway, let's go on to 39.

"The Buddha said:' ~Those who study the Way of the Buddha should believe and follow all that is said by the Buddha. Just as, when you eat honey (you find that) every drop of it is sweet, so is it with my words."

S : I'm not too sure about this saying because it doesn't seem completely in agreement with certain other points that the Buddha says according to the Pali Canon. So, yes, there are passages where the Buddha advises his disciples to test his words, to try his words as the goldsmith tests the gold. But here the Buddha is supposed to say.' ~ LLThose who study the WAY of the Buddha should believe and follow all that is said by the Buddha." I think that's really asking quite a lot. Believe, perhaps, but follow all that is said by the Buddha? All those teachings? That would seem to be very, very difficult.

vaf~ con~r~d~tor'y.

S : Well the~ might a~,~ear to be contradictor~ Well, what about : Just as, when you eat honey (you find that) every drop of it is sweet,so is it with my words"? Not necessarily, I would say. Maybe they're sweet in principle~ but in the mouth they might actually taste quite bitter. The Buddha doesn't always say things that are pleasing or agreeable or that we find easy to accept. No, I can't help thinking that this section was put together by the good monks who translated~ without very much scriptural basis. Perhaps they wanted to increase the faith of the Chinese people for whose sake they were compiling this sutra.

~otI : Perhaps it means something like when you eat honey you get a honey flavour with every bit that you eat, you don't get something different, so that all of the teachings... you'll find there's a thread running through.

S : Yes, there's certainly a common quality. The Buddha said in another place in the Pali Canon that just as the great ocean, just as the water of the great ocean has one taste from whichever part of the ocean you take the water, so my teaching has one taste, the taste of

liberation, emancipation, 'vimu~ti'

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S(ctd) But it's interesting that in the Pali Canon the common taste is salt, whereas here it's

sweet. I don't know whether there's any significance in that.

: (saf~) are two substances which are poisonous separately.

It doesn't seem to have that connotation here, though.

S . It's as if to say, well you'll enjoy every drop. Well, in a sense you will~ but it doesn't mean it's sort of sweet in the mouth.

I was talking to Vimala this morning and we were sort of saying that actually keeping in touch with the bit that sort of hurts () useful things. That seems to be the point that you really grow in.

S : People don't usually sort of gorge themselves on the Dharma, do they? Not really. It's sometimes quite difficult to swallow. Well, one might say that it's even acceptable that those who study the Way of the Buddha should believe and follow all that is said by the Buddha, but how are you to know that something was really said by the Buddha? I mean that is the question that a critical modern mind can't help asking.

It's putting emphasis on the words again, isn't it, in this section? Whereas before in the text it's sort of actually taken emphasis off the words. It's like... quite contradictory in a sense as to what has been taught before.

S : There's also the point that everything that the Buddha said is not necessarily applicable to your situation. I mean, the Buddha doesn't expound a sort of systematic philosophy, he's speaking to people, to individuals in accordance with their needs. On the other hand~ one can say that when you even just read the sutras, very often you do get an experience, an experience of delight, one may say, which you don't get from any other kind of literature, even the greatest poetry. There's something different which you get from them, which you enjoy when you read the sutras. There's a completely different experience. Alright, let's go on to 40.

"The Buddha said: ~A Sramana studying the Way should not be as an ox turning the mill-stone which, though it performs the necessary actions with its body, does not concentrate on them with its mind. If the Way is followed in the mind, of what use are actions?"

S : The note says: "Professor T'ang Yung T'ung takes this

for a Chan (Zen) substitution." Presumably he means this last sentence. So, ~the Buddha said: 1bA Sramana studying the Way should not be as an ox turning the mill-stone which, though it performs the necessary actions with its body, does not concentrate on them with its mind."

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S(ctd) : Well, that's quite straightforward, isn't it? Quite clear. A merely mechanical performance of so-called religious actions doesn't really help very much. Say, a mechanical performance of the puja, just saying the words, going through the motions without your mind,

your heart really being there~ isn't of very much use. But as for this supposedly Zen addition: "If the Way is followed in the mind, of what use are actions?" well, is that really true? Is it really very realistic? I mean, can you really sort of separate the mind from actions in that way? If you follow the Way in the mind well, it'll express itself in your speech and your actions.

Swfo~s£ : Does it mean - wonactions? I mean when it's spoken before () someone who doesn't act, acts from..

S : "If-the Way is followed in the mind, of what use are actions?" Well, actions are supposed to have a use. When the Way is followed in the mind, perhaps they become more useful still because they become more highly skilful. One could say it means ~at - if the Way is followed in the mind, what use is it to try to follow it in action? Well, it's true mind comes first, but speech and action presumably will follow si1fl~.

(This thing?) that's going on in the far distance, of all things being void and so on...

S : Yes. Perhaps it really is a Zen addition. ~ Imagine some Zen master or Zen editor not being very satisfied with this straightforward, clear saying and adding something to make it a bit more profound or difficult. One might say to follow the Way in the mind is more important, yes, certainly. But I mean actions aren't thereby ruled out altogether.

What do you mean by that? I mean , to follow the Way in the mind.

S : Well, supposing you're practising meditation, you could say you were following the Way in the mind,~you're concerned with your purely mental state. But one might say there are even actions whic~~~onduce to that; the very fact that you are sitting in a c~o~s-I~99e~ posture is an action, isn't it? Perhaps this sort of saying, this sort of sentence is useful only in the case of those people who attach a really exaggerated importance to actions, whc~ever they might be.

It does reflect the things that came earlier about purifying your mind rather than trying to cut off

certain actions.

S : Yes,yes.

: Sometimes actions are useful because they can bring about certain states of mind.

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S : Yes, indeed, certainly they can help. But it says if the Way is followed in the mind,~~dassuming the Way to be followed actually is

followed in the mind, of what use are actions? Well, it's really an irrelevant statement, because, alright, if the Way is followed in the mind, that's fine, that's where it should be followed, but if it's followed in the mind, it's not a question of, well, what use are actions? If the Way is followed in the mind it will be followed in action and speech too. That would seem to be the natural corollary of the first part of this statement. Well, maybe it S just meant to make us think. Any way, anything more about that saying?

: I feel if it's taken from the sort of Zen connotation what they meant by "what use are actions?" is very much like saying not sort of practising acts or something like that. It's (probably a reference to..?)

S : Yes, doing the non-doing actions. Yes.

S . It might be something like that. But there's another point here in the earlier part of the saying when the Buddha says: 'A Sramana studying the Way should not be as an ox turning the millstone.' So when the ox turns the millstone, what does he do?

Goes round in a circle.

S . He goes round in a circle. You don't really get anywhere, if you do things just mechanically. If you repeat the puja mechanically or just sit for meditation mechanically without really meditating. You just go round and round in the same old circle. You don't make any progress.

: You can see in the modern () The circle is very much like samsara itself.

S . Yes, indeed, yes. Anyway, any further point about that? The ox, the mill-stone.

: (I feel?) it's not to his advantage, really, the ox. S : No, the poor ox doesn't get anything out of it at all.

~otI . JkS~ 6o against your will

¼

you haven't actually made the decision yourself. S : Right. Yes, yes.

(Isn't there?) a story in the ~tr~ ~ne~te6 that goes up to the Buddha (~ue'~ quite an

argument about whether actions are connected with mind.

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(ctd) : They don't actually believe it. They do believe that the actions are separate from the mind. I can't remember any of the

S : Yes. According to the Pali scriptures there is a difference between the teaching of the Buddha and the teaching of Mahavira in this respect. According to Mahavira, that is to say according to Mahavira according to the Pali Canon---according to their representation of his views~Mahavira held that an action as such constituted karma irrespective of the mental state, whereas the Buddha is represented as teaching that an action does not constitute karma unless it is accompanied by a definite mental state, or rather not a mental state, an intention.

A volitional act?

S : Volitional, yes. Whereas according to the Jains, according to the Pali Canon~ even an unintentional action has the same karmic consequences as the same action committed intentionally. In other words, even the unintentional taking of life is as much a karma as the intentional taking of life. That's why the Jains, for instance, cover their... well, the Jain monks, cover their mouths and nostrils with a piece of gauze and so on, while they brush the path before them as they walk. You still find a few of them in Gujarat and in what used to be Mysore State. Anyway, shall we leave it there for today? Because we've got two sayings left which we could well deal with tomorrow morning.

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S : Well, we've just two sections left, 41 and 42. Would someone like to read 41?

"The Buddha said: "Those who follow the Way are like an ox bearing a heavy load and walking through deep mud. It feels so weary that it does not dare to look to left or right and, only on emerging from the mud, can it revive itself by resting. A Sramana should regard feelings and desires more seriously than (the ox regards) the mud. Only by controlling his mind and thinking of the Way can he avoid sorrow."

S : Hm. Do you ever feel like this, whether you're a Sramana or not? That you're like an ox bearing a heavy load and walking through deep mud getting so weary that you don't dare to look left or right? What this sort of image really suggest? ~specially as feelings and desires, that's to say presumably unskilful or unhealthy feelings or M~rotic desires are regarded as mud. I suppose sometimes one does feel sort of quite overwhelmed by unskilful mental states, feel as though one is making one's way through them, just like the poor old ox who is bearing a heavy load, wading through deep mud.

It's like getting bogged down.

S : Yes, bogged down. Yes. It is not the sort of image that one cares to dwell on very much. One can think of oneself as a beautiful winged creature floating or soaring above it all! And of course on the other hand, one mustn't forget that the lotus blooms from the mud

also. That's the other side of the picture. Or looking at it in another way; from one point of view it's clay, from another point of view it's a Buddha image, if you see what I mean. And this is also significant, perhaps. Only on emerging from the mud, can it revive itself by resting~~ So what does this suggest?

Perhaps you really can't stop...

S : Yes, yes. You can only afford to rest, to take it easy a bit, when you're out of the mud.

: Does it mean that otherwise you sink into it?

S : Well, yes, you might. Or you might get so despondent that you just stand there and let it overwhelm you. There's no time for rest, not while you're in the middle of the mud and are not yet out of it. And once you're out of it, at least for a bit or once you've emerged from one particularly nasty boggy bit, then you can allow yourselves to rest for a few minutes.

: Too bad what you were saying about the Buddha image, that suggests that it's actually... what the Buddha image is made out of is the actual mud and clay, that's being transformed or made different, whereas this sounds like the ox is totally different from the mud and although he's going through it, he's not really part of it in a sense that...

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S : Well, both images do represent a portion of the truth. They're not really inconsistent. When you're working on your unskilful mental states, well, there are you working on your unskilful mental states. They're quite separate. But nonetheless there isn't a complete dualism. The energy, so to speak, which is in those unskilful mental states can be used for positive purposes. The clay can be shaped into a Buddha image. Except that you can't really follow the image too literally in that the clay, in process of being transformed into a Buddha image, or shaped into a Buddha image, changes its nature. You could say that. You could extend the image and speak of baking the clay. Or even of refining the clay. You have to pick the stones out or bits of dirt; take clean clay but anyway, perhaps you don't so often feel that you're a lump of clay in process of becoming a Buddha image. You don't feel that so often as you feel like the poor old bullock plodding his way through the mire.

: I don't really feel like that. If I'm actually doing it, if I feel I'm on the right lines, I generally feel anything but suffering; dragging through mud. I feel really good. But if I sometimes get myself tangled up in things I don't really want to do, because I haven't been aware enough of what I do want, then I sometimes feel (like that. I've just got to get through it somehow, but I don't associate that with following the Way. Good.) If I, even sometimes as it in this study group or the other one? the other one- of the spiritual life being like getting onto the back of a horse galloping away. - you feel more like that?

: Yes.

S : Yes, well' one could also play around with the image a little bit and say that the mud is not always just unskilful mental states; sometimes it's duties unwillingly accepted;

even so-called 'spiritual duties'. You might even sometimes- in your weaker moments feel that at your co-op is like the mud. Here you are, sort of plodding through it. But here, yes, here the mud does stand for unskilful mental states that you're finding it very difficult to work through, to get beyond. Anyway, let's plod on~~ There doesn't really seem to be much to say about that. Sometimes one does feel like that. ~perhaps it isn't good to feel like that too often. Would someone like to read- that nice long concluding one? Read it really well!

-. "The Buddha said: 'I look upon the state of kings and princes as upon dust which blows through a crack. I look upon ornaments of gold and jewels as upon rubble. I look upon garments of the finest silk as upon worn-out rags. I look upon a major chiliocosm as upon a small nut. I look upon the Anavapta as upon oil for smearing the feet. (On the other hand), I look upon expedient methods (leading to the truth) as upon spending heaps of jewels. I look upon the

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(Ctd) : - supreme vehicle as upon a dream of abundant wealth. I look upon the Buddha's Way as upon all the splendours which confront the eye. I look upon dhyana meditation as upon the pillar of Mount Sumeru. - I look upon Nirvana as upon waking at daybreak from a night's sleep. I look upon heresy erected as upon six dragons dancing. I look upon the universal, impartial attitude (of a Buddha) as upon the Absolute Reality. I look upon conversion (to the Way) as upon the changes undergone by a tree (due to the action of the) four seasons."

S Good. This section falls into two parts. It contrasts the way in which the Buddha looks upon worldly things, even upon things which people usually value very highly, and the way in which he looks upon spiritual things. He seems to value spiritual things as much as worldly people usually value worldly things. And he seems to value worldly things as much as worldly people seem to value spiritual things. In other words the Buddha's values are completely reversed. "I look upon the state of kings and princes as upon the dust which blows through a crack." This represents a sort of complete repudiation of power, and position and authority: ~ the Buddha attaches no importance to them ~ whatever. It reminds me a little bit of those lines in 'Hamlet' where I think it's Hamlet says: "The dust of Alexander turns to clay; can stop a hole to keep the wind away":~ It's a bit like that, isn't it? So "I look upon the state of kings and princes as upon the dust which blows through a crack." Complete disregard for all worldly power and pomp and authority.

"I look upon ornaments of gold and jewels as upon rubble." The Buddha has no appreciation even of the finest - is it Dior?

Vc~~es : Yes.

S : Even I have heard of Dior! "I look upon garments of the finest silk as upon worn-out rags. I look upon a major chiliocosm" (a three-thousand fold, great thousand-fold world) "as upon a small nut." H~~~ not impressed by sheer immensity. Not even impressed by physical magnitude. Not impressed by quantity at all. It's quality that he's impressed by. "I look upon

the Anav~pta~s upon oil for smearing the feet." What is the Anava?~ta? According to the footnote "A lake reputed to be north of the H~imalayas and said to be 800 li round (one li a third of a mile)" and it's considered to be a sacred lske; it~s a place of pilgrimage; the gods are supposed to live there. B t the Buddha looks upon it, on the waters of the Anavp~ta, as upon oil for smearing the feet. One must remember, or bear in mind, the ancient Indian attitude was that~~eet and anything th-at touches the feet was particularly unworthy. In India people are very sensitive to anything to do with the head or th-e feet. The Th-ais likewise. You must never touch any- body with your feet.

Or any sacred books, or books.

° I~~rj~~ ~~~~~ ~C-() A~~ t~s'aL ~

S'r~j<t stor ~I~ ~ icece t~e wt~a ____ 3;;.

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S : Or even point your feet in the direction of a shrine. So the Buddha has no regard for places conventionally regarded as sacred. Do you see what I mean? There are all sorts of stories to this effect in myth and legend. There's a story about Guru Nanak, the guru of the Sikhs. According to this story he~ent to Mecca; he made a pilgrimage to Mecca because he was sympathetic to all religions. So when he was in Mecca he sat down with his feet pointing towards the ~&aba . So his Muslim friends were very shOcked and annoyed, so they took him bodily and they turned him round so that his feet were pointing away from the ~aaba-. But according to the story thek(&~aba came and put itself opposite his feet! Now this story illustrates a genuine saint's or a genuine mystic's disregard for conventional religious observances or values; this is the point of the story. Again~y0u get this sort of thing in the Zen tradition, ~ sort of iconoclasm. It's not or&M~~~ rationalistic or humanistic iconoclasm, but a sort of spiritually based iconoclasm. As when the Zen monk was staying at the temple overnight; he felt cold because it was the depths of winter and he chopped up some wooden images to make~fire, to keep him- self warm. It's that sort of attitude. There's nothing intrinsically sacred or holy in an image. It~s holy only by association. And no doubt, yes, images are useful in helping us focus our feelings Of devotion, but if you start regarding the image~~itself-, the wood it- self, so to speak, as something inty\$n~ic~lly holy and sacred, well then you~ re making a mistake ~and sometimes that point has to be made in~a highly dramatic way which may even upset and disturb the feelings of, so to speak, conventionally reli-gious people. I mean, for instance, if you were to go this morning into a Christian church, if you were a man, wearing your hat, people would be upset. They might be people who are not exactly following th- teachings- of the Sermon on the Mount, to say the least. But they would be upset by your failure- to respect the sacredness, as they saw it, of the building. Do you see~what I mean? So you could i-magine a great Chtistian saint Cif you can imagine a great Christian saint being iconoclastic) deliberately going into the temple or th-e cathedral or church, wearing his hat. You see the Quakers were a bit like this, weren't they? They refus-ed to take off their hat. In their case they refused to take it off to anyone except God, they'd take it off for prayer, but they wouldn't remove it even for the King, beca~se they

t;to~~~ that you shouldn't show- that degree of respect to a fellow human being. They were sort of socially iconoclastic. So th-is is what this sort of saying is getting at. "I " look upon the Anav~~pta as upon oil for smearing the feet. I'm not impressed~by its reputation as being a holy place etc. To me it's no more holy than the oil that is used for smearing the feet. On the other hand, for someone who is beginning in the spiri-tual life, you need to obs-erve these things. You need to behave respectfully in the shrine~ etc. etc. You're trying to develop your feelings of devotion and so on. But nonetheless, all these things connected with shrines and images~ and h.oly--places; these-are all, in a way, conventional values. Th~~~~~ nothing intrinsically holy

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S(ctd) : about a particular place or particular o~e*.. There's a story about a Hindu saint who was.... who received a kind of awakening in his early days, in his early life. When he went -to the Shiva temple to pray, very late at night and he was sitting right in front of the Shiva image praying and worshipping and then some little mice came out. He saw them nibbling the offerings and he thought: "What sort of god is this? ~t. can't even protect It.s own offerings. How can it protect me?" So, anyway, that resulted in a sort of awakening that religion didn't consist in coming and praying to this image, to this idol . It was something else. B-efore that he had £~p~re~tly thought that the image is all powerful, it can protect me and so on and so forth. I think~ though~ in the modern West we've had~too much sort of humanistic iconoclasm. I think here we can do with more reverence and more devotion. I don't tkiink we need to be particularly iconoclastic.

: If our reverence and our devotion can build up, like, within you, so that the association with it. is positive, whereas I think if it's something that's (to1~to you that's

S . Or if your - feelings of devotion~associated e~xclusively with certain places and certain objects. That is the danger.

It's like using something archetypal imaginatively and responding to it in that way.

S : But different people may have different needs. There's a story about a modern Zen master. Apparently the Zen master was showing a European Christian visitor around a Buddhist temple. Whenever they- cameb~~ the image the Ze~n master would just bow politely, w-ell, reverently, to the image and this rather ups-et the Christian visitor because he saw it as idol worship. He said rather angrily: "When I s-ee thes-e images I just feel like spitting at them." So the Zen master said: ~OK~ you spit, I bow." But this also illustrates Buddhist broadmindedness and tolerance.

: -. There's a practical question I would like to ask. In beginners~' classes, sometimes if I -go into the shrine room I do juSt li-ke to sort of bow before I meditate. I mean it's jus-t like a part of preparation that I do. But quite often I'm aware of the beginners and I hold back and don't do that because I ~on~t want to sort of make them think it's weird. Is that, I wondered....

S : But what do you think the beginners would really think?

~W~~ W~irat.

S : Well, how do you think they do feel? I mean would they really think you weird or would they just think, oh that's the custom~o~the place, - sort of thing? I mean if you did a full.prostration, they might think it a bit weird, but if you just bow I think a beginner could

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S(ctd) : ~~~c~pt that without any difficulty.

° Sometimes I'm not sure they do. Because what they do is, they slot~~~nto their own experience of Christian worship

and they think... .I know I did at first, slot crosses in with Buddha images.

S . But do Christians bow?

: Oh, yes. Genuflect!

S : ~ ~enuflect. 9r~r~~~~ts do~'. i'(o~ ?r@~c~t.~sI I was brought up always to bow when I walked in, ~~,

S : Which sort of church was that? Anglican. S : Ah,
Anglican. Then it was probably High Church. No, it wasn't High Church, sorry!

S : But what did you bow to? Because Catholics usually genuflect to the Sacrament.

No, it was just to the altar. S : Just to the altar.

C~vi& : Well, Lower Church definitely don't bow. They would have fits if anybody bowed in a church. They'd be shocked to

death!

I think if there's a shrine and a rupa on it, I think that's- quite s-tartling for a beginner anyway. I don't think it makes much difference whether people bow or not. I think...

S : Ah, right. If you expose them to the shrine~ you might as well e~pose them to the bow ! If you think they c~n~t stand the bow, then the beginners~ class or whatever

should be in a room without an image in that case. We have said that that is a possibility. I think that used to be done at- the Annexe, didn't it? When classes were held there. You just have a little table, perhaps with flowers and lighted candles and incense. don't know whether people are still doing this or whether they introduce them to the full rigours of the shrine immediately.

Moui : () at the course at Covent Garden you couldn't. Parti~y it was deliberate, but it would have

been quite difficult to have a s-hrine.

S : Perhaps it's just as well. Then you can explain to people about the shrine before they actually come along and see it.

Things are actually still done.... I've noticed on

beginners' retreats that I've been with, things are actually still done quite gently for beginners, usually.

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The beginners' class on Wednesday, they trot straight into the main shrine.

S : Ask whoever's responsible whether they'd actually thought about that or whether they'd forgotten to consider it. Because it should be considered, ~I think.

I once gave somebody an LBC leaflet and the first thing she said was: "Oh, what's this? Are you idol-worshippers?" Or something like that. "What is the significance of this Buddha?" because there were pictures of it there.

S : Yes, even things like that one has to consider. Whether to have a picture of a shrine in your publicity.

We do that at (~e)) just use incense. Or some- times we use incense, flowers and candles, but explain the meanings and the people are quite impressed when you tell them why you use these ~fferent things. Because if they see all those things on the shrine, if they find it a bit strange, (a bit?) Eastern connotations and just react to it.

S . Some people find incense itself weird. It brings to mind all sorts of strange oriental associations. Harems, dancing girls...! It doesn't necessarily make them think of anything spiritual.

~h~'st;~: It has more hippy connotations.

S : Yes, that's true. Yes. Because of burning incense to disguise the smell of dope.

There's also being packaged up now like an air-freshener. And it's also being sold, a lot of it, like air-fresheners and being bought by sort of housewives and people like that.

S : Yes. That's more acceptable because ~ health-oriented.
Well, in India, actually, it's a bit like that because very often people burn incense in the house at meal times to keep away the flies. So it is a sort of air-freshener.

There's one other point I was going to make, that we have after all to remember that in Buddhism originally there was no such thing as the Buddha image. It developed two or three hundred years later. And for some time stupas fulfilled the function of images. So that we shouldn't think that images, or even showing respect to images~ is an essential part of Buddhism, in the sense of an essential part of Buddhist doctrine or teaching or spiritual life. For several hundred years~Buddhism in India got on without it. It was introduced ~ axpient. It was actually found helpful. If we don't find it helpful we are perfectly, completely at liberty to discard it. If we really wanted, if we decided that, well, we were going to, in a way, adopt a sort of Islamic attitude to not having ~images, well, we could refer back to the early centuries of Buddhism. So we do have that sort of freedom. It isn't un-Buddhist~ much less still anti-Buddhist,-not to have images around. There is in fact a sect in Korea, a modern sect, which has discarded the use of images. This might be under

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S(ctd) : Protestant Christian influence or in response to Protestant Christian missionary criticism. They just have a scroll with a circle drawn on it. I mean not just a circle drawn with a pair of compasses. A circle like the circle you get at the end of the series - of Zen Ox-holding pictures. Every sort of vibrant, expressive sort~~i~'~!~l e,ve~~%'oAld. This, according to them, expresses the Absolute. It symbolises the Dharma-kaya. So they just hang a scroll with this rather powerful circle on the wall. And they have a vase of flowers in front. They don't have an image. So this is perfectly valid. This is not un-Buddhist.

: A prayer rug which just shows an opening with a light would also be quite symbolic, would it?

S : Are you speaking of the Moslem prayer rug? Yes, the niche indicates the direction of Mecca, so it indicates your sort of spiritual orientation, as it were. I suppose we could, if we wished, have a niche in the direction of Buddhagaya. tA;~i5t~e&~~ But you don't have to have an image, ~ So this point can be made to people who feel a bit hesitant with regard to images, even if their hesitafl~> is to some extent culturally conditioned. We can point out, well, images are not an essential part of Buddhism. Even when we do have images, we don't have them as idols. We have them in much the same way that you may have, say, in your study, a bust of Beethoven or something of that sort to remind you of that great person

and to inspire you by reminding you about his life and what he achieved. It's more like that. I mean, if, say, on the anniversary of Beethoven's birth you just placed a laurel wreath at the foot of his statue, that doesn't really count as idol worship, does it? It's much more like that. So this is how the Buddha looks upon worldly things. But then on the other hand: "I look upon expedient methods (leading to the truth) as upon spending heaps of jewels." These expedient methods are the skilful means. He feels when he's using skilful means as though he's spending heaps of jewels. What's the point of the comparison here?

: That they're as valuable as jewels.

S : Yes. They're as valuable as jewels. When you're using skilful means to convey the Dharma to people, to communicate the Dharma, it's as though you're distributing treasure. One should really have this attitude when one is, so to speak, teaching the Dharma. I think your whole manner and attitude must convey this, not least in beginners' classes. That you're really communicating something that you value very highly. Your whole manner, your whole attitude must convey this.

It is important to teach from your own conviction as well, isn't it? and not just throw in things you're not sure about.

S Yes.

~isti T~~e~~ a feeling of abundance too. Heaps of jewels.

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S Yes, not just one or two little bits and pieces. "I look upon the supreme vehicle," that is to say the Mahayana, "as upon a dream of abundant wealth." How pleasant it is to dream of possessing abundant wealth, so you can buy, spend whatever you like. So the Mahayana is like that.

But that's... I mean as far as looking at... that's incorrect, because the Mahayana didn't exist when the Buddha was alive, did it? The Mahayana came about after his death.

S :- Well, that's true, historically speaking.

So, what is it getting at? ~ ~ ~5rce ~~~~ -

S : Perhaps the principle. The expression, by the way, 'ekayana'.does in the Pali Canon, b-ut I don~t think the expression 'mahayana' does. But ~parayana~ does1o~ ~Ekayana~~does5

What are they? What is 'ekayana'?

S : Well, at the beginning of the 'Sattipatthana Sutta1- th-e Buddha says: "Ekayana magga." The path is one way, one yana,and then he identifies that with the Sattipatthana, the fourfold ptactice of mindfulness. This is the one way to emancipation, 'ekayana'. So that term is there. Again it occurs in the S~a~~r~ ?~~~r'k~ Sutra, where the Buddha there explains~~~e three yanas of Sravakayana, Pratyekabuddhayana, and Bodhisattvayana all converge into the Ekayana, the one way to supreme Enlightenment for all. But yes, historically w-hat you say is quite right. If these teachings are taken from the Pali Scriptures or th~r equivalent, then there cannot really- be a mention of the Supreme 'Vehicle in the sense which th~t/afterwards attained historically. So it is a bit anachrOnis-tic. "I look upon the Buddha's Way as upon all the splendours which confront the eye." You see the Buddha's Way as a vast panorama. You usually think of a wa'y as something strait and narrow. Maybe that derives from Christianity. In Christ~an~ty it's the broad way that leadeth to destuction. This is rather interes-ting. The~~~~ some truth in the Christian comparison> too. But w~~~v~ come to think because of that pass-age in the New Testam~t of th-e right way, the spiritual path as- s-omething strai t and narrow. And the way of sin and enjoyment as broad. The path that leads to destruction. 11Straj~~t is the ~ate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto eternal life, but broad is the gate and wide is the- way that leadeth unto destruction." Som~e- thing like that. That image h-as- its own significance, but i't does convey a s-sort of impression that the spiritual life is a very- narrow, very rigid, very confined, very difficult to squeeze through, a very narrow sort of tunnel.

Sate~~~: I"t's- more like the o~ not daring to look from left to right wading through the mud.

3~I

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S : Yes, yes. It's more solid than that~, perhaps. A rock, a rock. Whereas the way of sin, well, that's broad, there's plenty of space. But in Buddhism it suggests other way round. "I look upon the Buddha's Way as upon all the splendours which confront the eye." Like seeing a vast, magnificent scene. The Buddha Way is very broad. So many millions of beings of different kinds tread it. It's the bad part which is ver narrow and restricted. "I look upo dhyana meditation as upon the pillar of Mount Sumeru." What is Mount Sumeru? A sort

of cosmic mountain at the centre of the universe supporting the world system. So this suggests that meditation supports the spiritual life~~ ?t~e great central pillar of the spiritual life, upholding everything else. This is the suggestion here. One could even say that one's daily practice of meditation is like the great central supporting pillar of your whole spiritual practice. But if that central pillar becomes a bit thin, or if it's just one or two stones rather loosely piled on each other, well, it's not going to give much overall support to the edifice of your spiritual life. Or if there's a great crack running through it. And then: "I look upon Nirvana as upon waking at day-break from a night's sleep." When you wake up in the morning, especially on a fresh Spring day and it's so bright and so clear, little birds are singing and you can smell the scent of the flowers, you're so happy to wake up. Well, Nirvana is like that.

Dew-drops on the ground! S : Yes! : What would you liken the crack to?

S : The crack in the pillar? What effect does the crack have on the pillar? It sort of weakens. It looks strong but it isn't really so. If you forced me to make a detailed comparison...! The cracked pillar is like the meditation which only seems to be meditation. You might have to look quite closely at the pillar to see that it's really cracked, not really so strong as it looks. In the same~way, someone might sit regularly on their cushion,P6eI~eCs%~closed, sitting upright, but they may not really be meditating at all. Their mind would be wandering to such an extent. In that case the pillar would be cracked. It wouldn't be as strong as it looked. Will that do? "I look upon heresy erected as upon six dragons dancing." Why six?

That's what it says.

S - : Six dragons dancing. Why six particularly?

\$~ig~~: Oh, the six... In the Buddha's time weren~t there six other doctrines?

S : Yes, six chief heretical teachers. So what's the point of this six dragons dancing? The dragon is the 'naga~ They~re rather dangerous, they~re poisonous.

Quite powerful.

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S : And powerful, yes. So it is as though these six heretical teachers are like that. Great poisonous serpents dancing around. One can see that even nowadays with all these pseudo-messiahs and gurus, all these sort of figures dancing around. In other words the Buddha is not impressed by these - I shouldn't say heretical teachers, heresy isn't really appropriate ~er~~~ajTeachers of false views, prop~gators of fals0eMv1ews~*1j~1~e the Pope, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Billy Graham, Guru Maharaj and the rest of them.

What were the six that were around in the Buddha's day?

S : Ah. For detailed information you'll have to look up accounts of the Buddha's life.

But there is for instance, Makkhali Gosala and Sanjaya Belatthaputta~a'ught extreme scepticism. We do know roughly what they taught. The summaries of all their views are in the Pali texts.

SMIO~~ : Mahavira.

S : Mahavira, known under the name (Nathaputtha?) (who was secr~)~ that is to say he was a proponent of extreme asceticism and self-mortification. And of course the Brahmajala sutta lists sixty-two important wrong views which are liSte~~~~~ the first sutta of the 'Digha-Nikaya' In Tuscany it was interesting to se~~~~veral people become especially interested in this sutra and One indeed gave a lecture on it. People were surprised to find how interesting all this old material was once they started digging into it. You just need a bit of time, as well as the interest, of course.

: What is a 'naga'?

S : A 'naga' is a sort of powerful, semi-mytholog~ical serpent- like creature; appears in the form of a serpent. Some- times represented iconographically as half-human~being, half-serpent. There's some very good representations in this °- -- 'Image of Man' exhibition.

(end of side one)

S human, the lower part is that of a serpent. But they have also serpent hoods curving over the head. And some of them are represented as being friendly to the Buddha and even his disciples. Like Mucalinda, who protected him during the rain-storm immediately after the Enlightenment.

~This~ : You said once you thought they were quite prevalent in the West nowadays.

S : Hm. That was dragons in the sense of big head, small body. When translating from Pali or Sanskrit into Chinese 'naga' is usually rendered by the Chinese word for dragon, though they're not really quite the same creature. I think the Chinese word is (Liu?) Do you know anything about Chinese dragons, Els?~? No, well, they're quite different from the Indian one. In Chinese mythology the dragon has got a lion's mane, tiger's claws~ and various other features of that sort, ~nd is a symbol

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S(ctd) : of the Yang principle. (Humans?) are the symbol of the Yin principle. They're not evil. I think that's important to~ remember. They're not exactly good, but they're

not evil~ in the Christian sense. They're ambiguous....

Neither one nor the other.

S : and they're powerful and quite dangerous. And then: "I look upon the universal, impartial attitude (of a Buddha) as upon the Absolute Reality." Even here don't you think there's a possibility of misunderstanding with regard to the nature of this universal, impartial attitude? If you're not careful it sounds a bit cold, a bit remote, a bit aloof. ~"t i~'s an impartiality of metta a~ K£~~~~~ the same metta, the same karuna towards all. Not the same indifference. I think it's very important to remember this.

: You see the footnote isn't very good because it says: "Impartial in the sense of being unmoved by desire for or aversion to anything whatsoever."

S : Yes. You just don't care, I suppose. ~on~t particularly care about good. That is misleading. Then what about this last comparison? "I look upon conversion (to the Way) as upon the changes undergone by a tree (due to the action of the) four seasons." This doesn't sound very Indian, actually~ it sounds more Chinese. This too could be misunderstood. I mean is conversion to the way ILrcrati~ ~ike " the changes undergone by a tree (due to the action of the) four seasons"\\ The comparison could be misunderstood.

: Yes, because it gives you the impression of cyclic... i~ev?t£ble.

S : Yes. It's true that Winter does give way to Spring. You could certainly compare conversion to the Way to that. You know, the conversion from worldly to - spiritual life is like the passage from Winter into Spring. But Spring passes into Summer, Summer into Autumn and Autumn brings- back Winter again. But in the case of conversion to the Way, to the spiritual life, that isn't the case. It's not a cyclical process. So there i~n~t really much of a resemblance between the two.

Unless perhaps you thought of it as maturation.

S . Yes. B-ut even so, maturation is reversed eventually. "The changes undergone by a tree (due to the action of the) four seasons." So conversion to the Way is not literally like that at all, because you come back to your starting point, don't you, again and again?

StcpAa~~t : If you could assume that th-e tree could develop, you could say that the basis on which it developed was the fact that it experienced the cyclical existence. And so that converted the tree to the Way- because it got fed up with the four seasons.

S : You could do. That's very ingenious!

S~Ic~aria: Some trees do flower as well as... ~~t~e Sa~~,e tt'ett.

3q4

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: It's sort of a bit more like~rain in the desert. S Yes, perhaps, yes.

Staf~n~c: Actually~ things do evolve, don't they? Any form of life does evolve as it undergoes cyclical changes. But a tree isn't a prime example of that. I mean physical evolution.

S . Well, it stays in one place to be gin with!

~~zпки~~: Yes, but I mean the species evolves.

S . Yes, the species evolves. In the sense of passing over into a new species, more highly developed species.

steefaw'tt: Yes, slight c~anges happen. You can see it much more with animals.

S : But in the case of the spiritual life one is concerned with the evolution of the individual.

S~~~~artje : It would be lower evolution, wo~I~~~i~?

S : So here one has, so to speak, the Buddha's attitude towards worldly things, and then his attitude towards spiritual things and the two are contrasted. And he clearly values spiritual things very much more than he does~w~orldly things". Any further point arising out of that? Because if there isn't w~'v~ done our 42 sections. W~ell, no~ I shouldn't say done them. ~~~v~ gone through them once. We could probably go through them a hundred times and still find -more points, find more to understand, -more to get into.

It's really dramatic.

S : Yes. One really notices that when you go through a text, a traditional text in this sort of way. Y~ou get ~ar more out of it than you could possibly have i-magined was there, just reading it through to yourself. It really is quite amazing. Especially when you've got a number of minds all bent on the same text, all trying to dig something out of it.

: Treasure hunt.

S Treasure hunt. Yes, yes.

: Especially I like this one because it's so poetical and so many- images and metaphors~and ~~ on. It just... it's very. .. it really makes you... it inspires you, it makes you want to come back.

S : Well, you could develop a talk on almost any one of these sentences. ~~I look upon

dhyana meditation as upon the pillar of Mount Sumeru." Well, you could give a talk on the centrality of ineditation. Compare it to- a pillar in detail. Your thick pillar, your thin pillar, your cracked pillar etc! What it will support, in what way- does meditation support the spiritual - life~ etc. etc. You could

give a complete talk about this just one sentence, bringing out the meaning in full. Perhaps you should do this on a retreat. Each of you take one sentence and give a talk on

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S(ctd) : it. You could do so quite easily. But you can understand how difficult it must have been in those early days when Buddhism was being introduced into China, for these two monks to introduce this really alien teaching into China. And sort of be looking through the Scriptures or whatever sort of manuscripts they had; what shall we take out, what should we include in our anthology? If it is in fact an anthology, as seems to be the case. Would the Chinese be able to understand this? How would they react to that? How should we put something? Maybe change it a little bit to adapt it to the Chinese character or . Maybe condense it. Do you see what I mean? It must have -been a very difficult undertaking. But they seem to have achieved it. Some quite important aspects of the Buddha's teaching were communicated to the Chinese people in this way. And the 'Sutra of 42 Sections' has retained a place of permanent importance in Chinese Buddhism. A text well-known to practically everybody who took Buddhism at all seriously. So it's quite a simple, quite straightforward, unpretentious sort of work. And of course, as w~~v~ noticed, it does seem that it passed through the hands, at some stage or other, of some Zen people who felt it would be helpful to add a few little Zen touches to it. Maybe gently nudge people in the direction of Zen or make them aware of the perhaps wider perspectives of Zen or more unconventional &proa~~ of Zen. But it is quite a basic Buddhist text. I mean, perhaps the Buddha didn't say everything that he is supposed to have said in exactly th se words, but I think the majority of the sections do quite faithfully reflect the Buddha's attitude

: Do you think making up a compilation was the best way for those monks to take the Buddha's teaching to China,

rather than, say, choosing a specific sutra?

S : Well, some of course did that, and specific sutras were gradually translated. But this was very early days, perhaps they thought one sutra, one lengthy sutra, maybe dealing with just a few topics would have been too much at that stage. Also, as I think I mentioned at the beginning, they've sort of taken the 'Analects of Confucius' ~ apparently~ as a model. The Chinese, of cource, were not, it seets, so fond of all the repetition that you get in Indian w-orks. They were more concise, more to the point. So quite a bit here has been boiled down somewhat, - w~th the result that you get a~work a bit like the so-called 'Analects of Confucius' where you~ve got a seties of sayings by Confucius or little co~vtrs~tions b~cw~<n Confucius and his disciples. Each one headed 'the Master said'. So very likely these translators felt that,well, some- thing rather like that, short and rather sharp excerpts, would

go down~ with the Chinese educated classes much better than a~single, rather lengthy, maybe rather metaphysical~ rather repetitious work such as the Indians enjoy~ Later on, yes,-when the Chinese had got more accustomed to B~ddhism, all these things were translated. But no doubt they thought it wiser to be~in with some thing which w~as, as it w~ere, closer to Chinese culture,

the Chinese way of thinking and therefore hopefully more

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S(ctd) : acceptable to them. A bit like the case with Paul Travis' 'Gospel of the Buddha'. He edited extracts from the Buddhist sutras into a gospel-like form for the benefit of people in the West who might have liked to think of the Buddha as a sort of Oriental Christ with a Gospel. So just as you had the Gospel according to St. Matthew, St. Mark, well, you also had the Gospel of the Buddha. This went down well a hundred years ago or just under a hundred years ago, with a lot of people. It went into twenty or thirty editions, so it must have appealed to quite a lot of people. But there are several editions in print even now, quite big ones. But I think, well, people can now take just the Buddhist Sutras. They don't need, most of them, certainly Western Buddhists don't need, to have the teachings of the Buddha or the life of the Buddha put into the form of a gospel that reminds them of the Christian Gospels and therefore makes them feel more at home. Because one of the reasons why people have taken to Buddhism is that they don't feel at home with Christianity any longer. So they don't want their Buddhist wine, to use an un-Buddhistic metaphor, put into the old Christian bottle. They'd rather have a new bottle as well as the new wine. Or water I should say: Fresh, spring water. Or tea! Anyway, any final points before we wind up? So I'm hoping that those of you who have gone through this text in the course of the last ten days and especially perhaps those who've taken notes, will be able~ at some time or other, to take a group of people through this text. Study it again with them. But there's a word of warning here. I know that there are quite a few people, especially Order Members, have done this.~ ~ink that t~~re~ s a right way of doing this and a wrong way of doing it. The wrong way, it would appear, is if you study this text with a group of people section by section, but after reading,say, a single section, you sort of read out the notes you took. Do you see what I -mean? Some people have been doing this and it doesn't work very well. By all means consult your notes and go through them, before maybe taking a class. But when you take the clas-s tackle the section afre~ah. Even though you can do that better having consulted your notes and rememb-ered the discussion that we've had on this particular course. You see what I mean? If you just s-ort of read your notes or something like that, then it can become quite dull and you can be studying the text very much at second--hand. But the purpose of referring to your notes, if you do that, is jus-t to deepen your- own understanding before you tackle the text with another group of people afresh. And you have to be open to any insights that they may have to offer into the text as you go through it together. Read up your notes, by all means, beforehand, but don't expect the discussion in th~t study group to stick -rigidly to the lines that~wehave follow-ed or which our discu~sion has just spontaneously taken. Let their discuss-ion be spontaneous too, even though you are able to bring into that maybe more of an understanding than you would otherw-ise- have been able to do if you hadn't been on this course.

Alright, let's- leave it there and have a slightly early

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S(ctd) : cup of c~ffee. Give me time to see one or two people who are on~ my list. Alright then, that's that.

Thank you yery much, Bhante.