

## Sangharakshita In Seminar

### Right Livelihood

[Seminar held with the Windhorse Trading Chapter  
At Cross House, Titchwell, Norfolk on 26th December 1993]

**Those Present:** The Venerable Sangharakshita, Dharmacharis Vajraketu, Ruchiraketu, Kuladitya, Satyaloka, Keturaja, Vasubandhu, Lalitavajra, Ratnaketu, Aparimana, Sinhaketu, (apologies from Sanghaketu, Manapa).

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### Session One

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**Sangharakshita:** (*subsequently indicated in this seminar as S:*) So topic areas for Bhante; Right Livelihood, a complete path or preparation? So I was wondering first of all what one meant by a complete path, what was a complete path, what even was a path?

**Ruchiraketu:** This was in relation to developing Insight, and what you have there Bhante are really just main headings, and I've got some more details here. We just thought it would be useful for you to have an overview of the areas that we were interested in.

**S:** Right...I've been thinking about this question of path recently, I'll wind my way into the subject in my own way. The point of departure was when somebody started saying, in fact two different people, maybe one in the States, one in Britain, spoke of parenthood as a path, that being a parent is in itself a path. By which of course they meant a spiritual path, a path to Enlightenment. So this led me to think first of all, well, whether parenthood was a path, and then what was a path in general? So what is it about a path that enables you to say that parenthood is a path?

So I thought a way of approaching this would be by way of an extreme example. Suppose you take the example of say a butcher. A butcher might argue, well, being a butcher is a path, he might say that I cut up the meat mindfully, I serve my customers honestly, so me being a butcher is a path. So where would you say the objections to that are, if any? Or does this sound reasonable that being a butcher is a path?

**Kuladitya:** In the product which he is selling there is cruelty inherent in it isn't there, or harming living beings inherent in it.

**S:** Yes, so there are other aspects. So it may be true that he cuts up the meat mindfully and is honest, but you can't consider only those factors. Do you see what I mean? You have to see the extent to which the negative factors outweigh the positive or vice-versa. If the negative factors outweigh the positive, well you can't really talk of the trade of a butcher being a path. So one could go back to the example of parenthood being a path or not a path, because the argument goes that well, if you're a parent you have to develop qualities of patience, tolerance, unselfishness. Well those are all spiritual qualities, so you know parenthood is a path, it helps to develop those qualities. So is that reasoning correct would you say?

**Vajraketu:** It could be... Presumably.

**Satyaloka:** Well following your argument you could look for what other factors....

**S:** Yes, so what other factors are there? So on the negative side you have to recognise well, during your first years as a parent, especially if you're a solo-parent, you won't be able to go on retreat, you'll see very

little of your spiritual friends, you'll have no time for study, perhaps you won't be able to meditate. So those factors have to be weighed against.

So you can't say without qualification that being a parent does constitute a spiritual path. It might conceivably, under certain circumstances. Supposing that you did not have to work, you had a nurse maid etc,etc. Well even then perhaps you could not say that parenthood was a path, but only that parenthood did not prevent you from following the path, which is a different thing from parenthood being a path.

**Kuladitya:** Yes because trying to draw everything into the definition of a path seems to me to be somehow different from saying "this is the spiritual path", which has its own specific definition, and other things aren't the spiritual path. I mean it seems to me to blur the issue too much.

**S:** But also one could say that the fact that a particular way of life or life-style enables you to develop certain spiritual qualities does not necessarily mean that that life-style in itself and by itself does constitute a spiritual path. Anyhow leave aside parenthood for the moment, I don't think it concerns anyone actually here... No?... We have to make sure (laughter), I don't want to tread on any toes. So then the question further arises, well is there any way of life or life-style which is, which can be regarded as, a path in itself without any sort of qualification, that does not involve any negative features, by definition. Is there?... Perhaps not...What do you think?

**Satyaloka:** It's probably just more, or less, ideal.

**S:** Yes, well so far we have considered these various examples in those terms.

**Ratnaketu:** Didn't the Buddha recommend a life-style that was, if not perfect, then was very close to it?

**S:** Well there is the monastic one isn't there. So what about that? Could that be regarded as constituting the spiritual path by definition almost, or are there any negative aspects of that?

**Satyaloka:** When you say monastic do you mean a monk, brahmacarya?

**S:** The traditional, yes, including brahmacarya.

**Ruchiraketu:** I would have thought that it was impossible to define the spiritual path in terms of life-style. That a lot is going to depend on, for example attitude, (**S:** Right, yes.) that sort of thing. Because I am sure there can be bad monks as well as good monks.

**S:** Well it depends on what you mean by monk, because if you define a monk in a certain way, then by definition you couldn't have a bad monk, because if he didn't fulfill that definition he wouldn't be a monk, not really.

**Kuladitya:** Can one just criticise the path by way of criticising the people trying to walk the path. (**S:** Right, yes). The people might be imperfect but the....

**S:** Just as there can be bad parents, but that is not an argument that there can not be such a thing as parenthood as a spiritual path. It's merely that people are nominally parents don't follow the path that they are supposed to follow.

**Kuladitya:** Are we asking can there be ideal conditions? Is the path to do with the conditions under which we can practise.

**S:** Well clearly the path has some connection with them, you can't separate the path. But it does seem from the discussion so far that you can't speak of any particular livelihood, for want of a better term, or

vocation say, or avocation, as being in itself a spiritual path. (Pause).

**Satyaloka:** Isn't that a bit of a jump as being we were talking about (word unclear). Saying you can't speak of a particular vocation as being a spiritual path, are you saying well....

**S:** Well in part because it does....

**Satyaloka:** Because you can be an extreme parent, but after that you are saying well there may be degrees, or the attitude that you follow it with. You can say that it is a spiritual path, but you can't maybe say whether it doesn't have any negative features to it, or it's....

**S:** Probably there is no vocation, not even that of the monk, which has no negative features. Because you could argue against the traditional concept of monk-hood, you could say that well look the monk is dependent on others for his material support and that is not a good thing, you could certainly argue that. Though that is not the traditional way of looking at things.

**Ratnaketu:** Is the monk, (word unclear) monk, in terms of the original sense of the Buddhist.. He is dependent on others but is there anyone else who isn't, even a rich man is dependent on...

**S:** Well again it depends on, it raises again the question of what you mean by dependent? Because the rich man is dependent, in a sense, on others working for him. But in a sense of course they are dependent on him for supplying them with work, so there is a mutual dependence. But most people would say that he was more independent than they were, because he had perhaps more initiative than they did, and perhaps he was free to hire them and fire them, whereas they would not be free to hire and fire him.

**Kuladitya:** So does this mean that we have to talk about a path in terms of practices and principles rather than life-styles?

**S:** Yes it does seem that. Even though life-style is an expression of your principles. Also you can't really separate the conditions under which you practise principles, from the principles themselves. You don't practise the principles in a vacuum, and some situations are more helpful than others. We know that.

So if we come back to this sort of question: Right Livelihood, a complete path or preparation? So, you know, the question is, as I said, what do we mean by complete path? It does almost suggest that the path is something that exists by itself, if you take the phrase literally. (pause).

**Vajraketu:** If you go back to your butcher, presumably one would argue with him that he can practise his mindfulness and sensitivity to his customers etc, and that might get him a little bit along the way, but that there would be an absolute impossibility...

**S:** It's a bit like he was on the path of irregular steps. It's not that being a butcher he can make no progress whatever unless he gives it up immediately. No - because he could develop his mindfulness in that situation and a few other qualities, but then after a while, if his spiritual life did develop, he would definitely feel the need of developing other qualities that his present situation just did not allow him to develop.

**Vajraketu:** We would finish him with the argument that eventually, perhaps sooner rather than later, he would have to give up being a butcher.

**S:** Yes; that he could not go on indefinitely just saying "that's my livelihood, and that's quite separate from my spiritual life and my spiritual path". You can't separate the two in that sort of way.

**Vajraketu:** What we want to know really is....

**Kuladitya:**....do we have to give up selling gifts? (laughter) Does there come a point when we have to, or some of us after a period of time, might have to stop working in Right Livelihood and, say, go and live at Vajraloka and meditate and reflect and...

**S:** Well, again it depends on this question of attitude which was mentioned. It's not just a question of what you are doing, but also the attitude. The attitude is in a way part of what you are doing. And again this is perhaps a question of balancing out. Some attention does need to be given to what you are selling. I know Kulananda was very concerned about this years ago, perhaps you still all are. Perhaps you do not need to be concerned about it quite so much. Also there is a variety of things which you sell. Well for instance if you sell recycled glass, well at least it is recycled. And no doubt you are selling some things which are not necessities, well not in the sense that food is necessary. But then again you argue well look it's good for people to give one another presents, even though the presents in themselves may not be in the best of taste and all that. But the fact that people give presents is good, and that they are able to give presents is good. Again there is a balancing of positive and negative factors, quite apart from the fact that you are making money, much of which in the form of profits, goes to support the Movement. So, again as I said there are so many factors and aspects to be taken into consideration.

**Kuladitya:** This partly came out of comparing or contrasting the life-style that we tend to lead at Windhorse, the things which occupy our minds, with say living at Vajraloka, reflecting on impermanence, reflecting on....

**S:** Lets start it this way. Do you think that you are particularly mindful, does your work help you to be mindful, do you need to be mindful?

**Kuladitya:** We need to be mindful, yes.

**S:** And you're soon made aware if you are not mindful (**Kuladitya:** Yes), and you have to be mindful otherwise you don't succeed. So would you say that if you were to stay at Vajraloka, or Vajrakuta even, and practise there you would be more mindful than in your present situation?

**Keturaja:** It would be more a difference in quality and type of mindfulness. Because for example at work I might be very mindful of the different things that are going on, so I keep all those things in mind. But I might not notice, as I would at Vajraloka, the person sitting next to me is a bit upset for example. So there might be a different quality of mindfulness.

**S:** Different qualities..

**Kuladitya:** For our work we have to be, especially in certain intense bursts, quite mindful and aware. Like if I am selling, I have to be very aware of the customer, and all the time being receptive to what they are saying in working with them. But I might come out of that and then be quite unmindful. I think it's not so steady, not so calm, as one would be on retreat.

**S:** So I mean, well the point I am raising is don't take it for granted that staying at Vajraloka is going to make you more mindful. You see what I mean? Because maybe you have got space to be mindful there. But as far as I can make out, in your work there is an objective check up. You're made more quickly aware if you have been unmindful. So it's not that well when you're on the road you are in a situation that is not conducive to mindfulness, but if you could only go to Vajraloka, well you are going to be in a situation which is going to help you be more mindful. It isn't as straight forward as that. That is simply what I am saying.

**Kuladitya:** There is a drive to be mindful at work which perhaps we wouldn't personally experience when we are on retreat I suppose, because of our work, there are definite targets.

**S:** I think you mentioned the work drive. I think that is very important, and I think this is something that I noticed in the East with a lot of monks. In principle, in theory, in ideal situations, that there is a lack of drive. And I think in spiritual life you do need drive. And that is something that you do develop in Windhorse Trading. Well you don't succeed if you don't have it, it's as simple as that. So I think one of the important things about a situation like that at Windhorse Trading, is that there is a constant means of checking, objectively, how well you are doing. Not only in business terms, but even to some extent in spiritual terms. You may not get that in a more relaxed and, as it were, spiritual situation, unless you have a very fiery Zen type master perhaps. (long pause)

**S:** So how does all that relate to this particular point of Right Livelihood as a complete path or preparation?

**Ruchiraketu:** Well I think it's this question of, some of us have been working at Windhorse for eight years already, and could be there another ten or more years, it could even be a whole lifetime, of work at Windhorse Trading. Then this question [arises]; is that life-style conducive to developing Insight? OK we've talked a bit about mindfulness already, and I think certainly there are types of mindfulness that we can develop more easily. But in terms of actually developing Insight, I think the question has come up that maybe work is something that you do for a while to get your energy going, something like this. But then it is necessary to have a more refined approach, as represented by some sort of retreat like situation, in order for having the conditions for developing Insight. This is a topic that we've discussed in our chapter meetings.

**S:** One could ask what one means by Insight, but I take it we don't need to go into that. We have at least a rough idea of what we mean by Insight. I would say that one of the characteristics of Insight is, by its very nature, it is not dependent on any particular set of conditions. It could be that for certain people, at certain times, certain situations are more conducive to the development of Enlightenment. But in principle, by its very nature, Insight does not depend on any particular set of conditions. Because Insight arises within situations of non-Insight. Or its arising depends on situations or conditions that are not those of Insight. If you see the Transcendental as completely discontinuous with the mundane, well nothing of the mundane is any nearer to the Transcendental than anything else. So that nothing, ultimately, is more favourable to the arising of Insight than anything else. Insight being Insight into the Transcendental. So I think one needs to bear that in mind.

**Satyaloka:** Nevertheless...

**S:** Or even reflect on that. Also the general Buddhist trend of thought is that you are more likely to develop Insight on the basis of samatha meditation, on the basis of samatha. But on the other hand we have got so many case histories of, say Zen monks, say Zen masters who have developed Insight in quite different situations. I'm just saying this speculatively, I'm not sure whether maybe it is to some extent a cultural thing. In India they do tend to take things more easily, and are maybe more inclined to meditation perhaps than say the Japanese. Well then in India they developed this tradition of Insight arising in dependence on meditation. But that doesn't seem to be the pattern necessarily outside India, especially say in Japan.

So I think we can approach this with an open mind. You know not necessarily thinking that you have to have a very deep experience of meditation before any kind of Insight can arise. I don't think that is necessarily the case. It can arise in any situation, and in dependence on any set of conditions, none of which is ultimately any nearer to Insight than any other. So we find Zen monks having Insight experiences when they are chopping wood or even in the toilet, all sorts of other situations.

But having said that it does seem that Insight is more likely to arise if the situation is an extreme situation. Well if you're say in a meditative situation, the situation can take an extreme form just due to

stress of personal problems, or even philosophic difficulties, or because you are being urged by a very demanding master. But without those things I think you don't get it, even in the meditative situation. If there is no great pressing philosophical problem that you are desperate to solve, or an acute personal problem that you have just got to get over, or a master who is standing over you with a stick. If you don't have any of those things I think the meditative situation is not very likely, just by itself, to provide a basis for the development of Insight. Other situations outside the meditative situation, if they do push you to the edge, they can be situations in which Insight could arise.

Now you'll know whether, in the course of your work in Windhorse, if you are pushed to the edge in that way. I don't know because I'm not, as everybody knows, I've not done the vans or anything remotely like that (laughter). But you would know it if there aren't situations where sometimes you are pushed to the edge. Well for instance one way in which they can be pushed to the edge, I imagine, is perhaps when things aren't going very well. Maybe there are financial problems, and you tell yourself well yes there are these problems, but what is the challenge? Not to be disturbed, and just face the possibility of total failure with equanimity. That's the challenge. That's the edge towards which you are being pushed. That you are not you know deep down really concerned, ultimately concerned, about success or failure. At least not in a personal sense. Well that is just one little example, you can probably think of others.

**Satyaloka:** So round that you need to be able to reflect though. I mean you can be pushed to the edge, and just fall over the edge. What you need to do to be able to make use of that extreme situation. I mean presumably the extreme situation in itself isn't conducive to Insight. What you are talking about is being pushed in a certain way and having....

**S:** You have to be able to recall the Dharma in that situation, which you can do in an instant, yes. But you need to be able to recall the Dharma in that situation. Just as even when you are having a really beautiful meditation, you need to be able to return and as it were to a lower level, and develop vitakka/vicara and start reflecting. But within the more as it were practical and active situation you may have to think much more quickly.

**Keturaja:** Would you need a certain level of samatha in such an intensive situation to be able to sort of contain that experience and be able to apply the Dharma?

**S:** I think there only Insight really helps. Because samatha after all is only mundane, and it can be overthrown by other negative mundane factors. We know many stories that illustrate that. A monk can spend five, ten, fifteen years just absorbed in samatha, and can be completely thrown when he comes out of his cave within half an hour. It is only the Insight, the vipassana, which can't be overthrown. So that's in a way part of the pushing you to the edge. That no amount of samatha is really going to help you. The calm and equanimity that you need at that point is not that of meditation which is only mundane. You need the calm and equanimity which comes out of some degree of Insight.

**Kuladitya:** But that sounds like we need the Insight to gain the Insight.

**S:** You need at least an intellectual appreciation of that kind of equanimity to know that there is such a thing. That you know from your general study of the Dharma. You know that there is a difference between the temporary equanimity that you get with a practise of meditation, and the much deeper equanimity that you get as a result of your Insight into reality, to use just that term though perhaps ultimately it doesn't mean very much.

**Satyaloka:** But in that case one of those might have been reflected upon on retreat in samatha conditions, and turned over and clarified. Which is a bit different to saying just having an intellectual appreciation. So in that case you would need meditative conditions, that would have conduced to a clearer understanding of that, so that in that particular situation when it comes to mind it's...

**S:** I would say probably study would help more, if there was anything of that nature present. You know study would help more, otherwise you are only saying that if you have already got Insight it is more easy to develop Insight again. But we are considering the situation where perhaps you haven't ever developed Insight before. If you have developed a degree of Insight in a meditative situation well obviously that will help you in the work situation. So vice-versa, if you have developed Insight in the work situation, well that is going to help you develop further Insight when you do get into the meditative situation.

**Kuladitya:** So it is clarity of thought which we would have got through study, some sort of reflection within study, which would help us in this extreme situation at work.

**S:** So you say "a-ha this is an extreme situation. This is where I have an opportunity to develop Insight. I won't let myself just be swayed by hope or fear, anxiety, whatever".

**Keturaja:** So one would need to be able to have an attitude within work that the possibility of Insight was there.

**S:** Well presumably by the mere fact that one is an Order Member, that you are aware of that all the time.

**Satyloka:** But then one could decide (laughter) more or less in the air.

**S:** Also there are your spiritual friends. You might have a spiritual friend at your elbow who may not be a fierce Zen guru, but at least can remind you "well look, why get upset, just stay balanced" and that may be enough.

**Kuladitya:** It sounds a bit as if we need to stay practising when we are in these extreme situations. What I tend to find is if something goes wrong, I'll get angry, which takes me off the horns of the spiritual dilemma. So it's almost like if I can only stay practising, that will make....

**S:** But on the other hand you mustn't think in terms of superimposing the practise on what you are actually doing. What you are actually doing is the practise. And even if you get angry, it's not enough to say "oh no I mustn't get angry". That is just as it were on samatha level. You are thinking in terms of trying to develop Insight. Well what is this anger? Who is getting angry? Just even stay with the experience of anger, without expressing it, and look into it. Who is getting angry? Who is this I who is so upset? But not try to as it were smother the anger, or just to calm it down. That's not enough. That's just dealing with it as though it was a hindrance to samatha, which you can do. But we are talking about the possibility of developing Insight. You may say paradoxically, if you are thinking in terms of developing Insight, it may be more helpful to stay with the anger than to calm it down, provided you don't give it outward expression to it of course. But if you can't help giving outward expression to it, if it is there, well then you have to calm it down. And then when you get back to your five star luxury hotel perhaps you can summons up the five star anger. (laughter)

**Kuladitya:** I told you not to mention that Bhante. (more laughter)

**S:** OK sorry, four star (laughter)....Summons up the five star anger and deal with it. Well look what is this experience? What does it mean?

**Satyloka:** In your own teachings though to date, you have emphasised samatha as a necessary basis for vipassana. For absorbing the experience. You said that. Otherwise without it Insight can shatter you or just won't actually stick in a sense. And I guess that's what we are following, that sort of idea that's very much....

**S:** Well this brings in something else that I've been thinking about. You could summarise it by describing it as static and dynamic models of spiritual life, especially models of harmonious development. We know

that we have got the five spiritual faculties. And we do think in terms of holding them all in balance through mindfulness. This is one of our standard teachings. So you can think of it in terms of your here and now, being very mindful and having an equal meditation and activity, equal samatha and virya or equal faith and wisdom, saddha and wisdom. And all the time maintaining that balance.

So that may be all very well if you are living as it were in a vacuum. But you're not. You're living in the midst of changing conditions. So some of those changing conditions may call for more energy, or more meditation. So what is important is that you should be able to maintain that balance by responding with whatever spiritual faculty is appropriate at that time. You have them all as it were in readiness. But not every situation will enable them to manifest equally.

So in Windhorse you are often in a situation where energy is called for, rather than say meditation or faith. But again in another situation faith may be required. So it's not so much holding them all in equilibrium from moment to moment, but having them as it were all so to speak in reserve. And being able to call up the appropriate faculty or combination of faculties according to circumstances. And maintaining the balance in that way.

So also it's not so much a question of going into situations where you will be able to develop particular faculties, as being able to operate with particular faculties as circumstances require, and for as long as circumstances require. So when you are doing a puja, well that is when the faculty of faith has an opportunity to express itself. When you are on the road the faculty of virya. When you are in a quite calm situation, or actually meditating, well samadhi. When you are studying, then prajna and so on.

But again, over and above that, you could say well Insight can come into operation along with any of those faculties. So we need both the static model and the dynamic model. As persons we need to have a balance of the five faculties. But in so much as we are persons operating in the world, in changing circumstances, we need to actually manifest those faculties, or one or more of those faculties, at one or the same time according to circumstances.

This also ties up with the question of the complete path. So at any given moment no path is complete, in the sense that everything that you need to follow the path you are able to practise or put into operation. But you are, over a period of time, in different situations, calling forth different faculties. You follow the path in different ways at different times. Well you are still following the path. Otherwise we think too much in this static, or even not necessarily static model, of definite paths and doing definite things, one after the other. And that does not really correspond to the facts. It's all right as a provisional, initial model. But if we look at ourselves even outside the question of spiritual path and spiritual life, we are responding in all sorts of different ways all the time to different situations, different stimuli. So we do that in the case of the spiritual life, following the spiritual path too. As I have mentioned this model of the five spiritual faculties. That is a convenient one. And different faculties come into play in different situations.

**Satyaloka:** So is that harmonising versus a model of balance?

**S:** Yes. Harmonising as a verb, as opposed to a harmony which is static and established and does not change. Which is actually probably impossible to achieve.

**Kuladitya:** It does sound a bit too fixed doesn't it.

**S:** Though we often present it that you have got to balance faith and wisdom. Well in principle you have, but you may not always be able to balance them in practise. But they must all be there and able to go into operation as circumstances require or permit.

**Keturaja:** I was just thinking with regard to those faculties. You could say that Right Livelihood develops the faculty or muscle of energy, virya. So that one would be able to respond and harmonise in a situation that requires virya. So the question is working within a Right Livelihood life-style, are we doing



enough to exercise the other muscles as it were, the other faculties, to be able to respond...?

**S:** Well you could also look at those other faculties because, well you certainly need mindfulness. That's already been mentioned. So you have many opportunities to practise mindfulness. Well probably there is no life situation that does not give you such opportunities. And well faith, I suppose you need faith.

**Kuladitya:** You certainly do. (laughter)

**S:** And well wisdom in the ordinary sense you need, because wisdom has different levels. You need wisdom in the prudential sense, and wisdom in the highest sense is Insight. And that you can develop in any situation anyway. Concentration, well you may not be able to develop the dhyanas when you are on the road. But you do need concentration. You need concentration even when you are driving. Well above all when you are driving.

But having said that there probably are more specialised situations which you need from time to time, just to keep your five spiritual faculties healthy. Well you need pujas from time to time. You need meditation. You may need meditation retreats, well you will need meditation retreats. You will need study. So I'm not saying that you won't need recourse to those things. But I think what I am doing is trying to point out that you can't make too absolute a contrast between your Windhorse life-style and as it were those other things. You can no doubt develop all of them within the Windhorse life-style, at least to a good extent. But that doesn't preclude, perhaps needing even, other situations outside. Or perhaps within the broader Windhorse framework. Because the Windhorse framework does provide for periods of meditation and study doesn't it. So if you take Right Livelihood in that broader sense, I suppose it can be a complete path, if you take it in that broader sense.

**Satyaloka:** That's I think very much what we have got in mind when we are posing that question. [It] is including meditation retreats, including study, including community living. All those elements together. But there does come in, well have we got the balance right? We've got six weeks [annual retreat], which is the standard thing we've come up with. Shall we have no retreats, or shall we have four month retreats? Subhuti has said, at various points, of Order Members being on retreat for a third of the year. You I have heard about three months retreats. It could be a complete path arranged in a certain way.

**S:** In think I have said for Order Members a month a year on retreat haven't I? I think that's what I have normally said, no?

**Ruchiraketu:** Certainly, I think you have said different things at different times. But one of them was that it would be good for Order Members to have a month's solitary or equivalent, at least.

**S:** Because I have said in the past that the daily meditation practise, the weekly chapter meeting and the yearly one month retreat or one month of retreats [...] I take this as standard, or you might even say minimum. People could do more of different things obviously. Well there is the fact that we do live in the world. And there is the point that we don't have a full time monastic order, in the sense of a monastic order supported by others who work, which is the Theravada pattern. So of course in the case of Windhorse Trading, well in the case of all Team Based Right Livelihood businesses, there is the fact that part of the ideal is to provide a surplus for the Movement. So ideally, in theory, one could cut down, make much less money, have much more time for meditation. But you wouldn't be fulfilling that other objective.

I know in the past some people, not in Windhorse Trading, have taken rather a naïve view. I remember asking someone working in one of the women's businesses whether in fact they were giving dana and she assured me they were. But when I cross examined, it transpired that what she thought was dana was actually rent paid to the FWBO centre that owned the premises where they had their particular business. So she saw that as dana. But of course I didn't. This is some years ago I hasten to add.

**Vajraketu:** So broadly given that there is room for individual flexibility within the system that we operate, you seem to be saying that you regard six weeks retreat allowance, which is what everybody has, as being quite reasonable.

**S:** Yes, well I would regard it as generous, perhaps because I have been recently over to the States. I was quite surprised to find in my previous visit that most working people in the States have only two weeks holiday a year. And it is quite difficult for people there to get on FWBO retreats, especially if they have families. All they can do usually is to split. A week with the family and a week of retreat. That is all they can get in a year.

**Satyaloka:** But presumably Right Livelihoods are set up partly for that reason. Because working situations are such so that may be the case for ordinary jobs in the States. But here you are given the opportunity to arrange things one way or the other. You are saying that you think six weeks....

**S:** Yes I'm just saying for the purposes of comparison that we have to keep one eye on the world as it were, and how things are out there.

**Ruchiraketu:** I think again just bearing in mind the discussion that we were having that gave rise to this question. We were talking about devoting our lives as it were to Windhorse. And just wondering how, spiritually, that would work out. Because we could be talking about very long periods of time. And that might mean that we would need to change the emphasis in such a way as to have more of a balance within the work itself. Or else it might be that we would just think of Windhorse as something that we would do for a phase of our life as it were, and then move into a different phase. So that's really ....

**S:** .... So I suppose it depends how broadly one understands Right Livelihood. Because there has to be a livelihood at any period of our life, unless we retire on pensions or become as it were monks, and are supported out of dana. Otherwise we are in livelihood all our lives. So there might as well be continuity, you could argue.

There is another rather different angle from which to look at it. Which is that, what shall I say, nowadays we have lots of options, and it is very tempting to switch from one to the other. In the old days in the West, in connection with monastic life, there was what they called the vow of stability. On becoming a monk, that is a monk, not a friar - the Dominicans and Franciscans were quite different - but as a Benedictine or Cistercian monk, you took a vow of stability, which meant that you stayed all your life with one monastery. The monastery was your life, and it provided you with everything. It provided you with companionship. There was also the Liturgy. There was study for those who were able to study. They didn't do work, because they had lay-brothers to do the work, which was perhaps a weakness of the system, from a spiritual point of view. But it was a complete situation.

So you could compare Windhorse in a way with that. So perhaps you should think in terms of a vow of stability. You are not going to chop and change, and think in terms of doing other things at other times of your life. But that would presume that Windhorse really did provide you within its broad framework, with everything that a human being needed for pursuing the spiritual path. So perhaps that would mean that there was a provision for a change of work, provision for periods on retreat. But if it did provide all those things, I think there is no reason why someone shouldn't devote himself, I suppose I have to say herself also, to Windhorse Trading for life. And you would only leave it presumably when you were pensioned off. Even then probably you would be a very valued elder, in a sense non-working, in a community, and be looked after. Not this sort of shunted off into a hospital or hospice when you got a bit past it.

So one could certainly look at things in that way. Well that would assume looking at the Windhorse framework being sufficiently broad. I think these days we tend to change too much. I think there is an argument for committing oneself to, not just say the spiritual life in principle, or FWBO, or the Order in

principle for life, but even to a particular situation. But in my case I've had no alternative. I've not been able to get round the fact that I've founded the FWBO. I can't be something else within the Movement. So I've no alternative. I've no choice. (laughter)

**Vajraketu:** I'm sure we could find you a job Bhante (laughter).

**S:** But that wouldn't make any difference. Even if I gave up my responsibilities, it doesn't really make any difference. I just have less work to do, that's all. So I don't change the job description actually. So I think there is too much mobility in our modern life. It reflects itself in the FWBO, and well people [are] uncertain. I've seen so many people just keeping options open, and not sure of whether they should do this or that. (pause)

There are people perhaps who wouldn't ever join Windhorse Trading, and in a way should be allowed not to join so to speak. Maybe they just want to be into art. And they see that in the same way that you see Right Livelihood. They see the arts providing within that sort of framework every thing that they need to follow the spiritual life. That's their framework. I mean they also experience a lot of conflict sometimes. And also there is the question of support in their case. In your case that problem does not arise by the very nature of what you're into.

**Vajraketu:** It seems like the issue for us....

**S:** I suppose.... The fact that it is possible say to commit oneself to Windhorse for life doesn't of course necessarily mean that everybody in Windhorse should do that, or that it should be a requirement. But I think it probably would be good if there was a core of people committed to it for life.

**Vajraketu:** I think the issue for some of us, well speaking personally I don't have any.... I'm quite happy at the thought of committing myself to Windhorse for life. The issue for me is not so much the mobility as the question of the details of what makes it an overall (word unclear), and a harmonious and balanced... That it...

**S:** Well I certainly think that it could be. Perhaps it already is, I don't know. But I think it could be, if it isn't. And I think if anybody is thinking in terms of committing himself for life, I don't think he needs to feel bad about it, and think "oh well maybe there is something wrong with me, maybe I ought to be doing something else, maybe there is some aspect of my personality that is not getting nourished in this situation". (laughter) I don't think you need to feel bad about feeling happy to commit yourself for the rest of your life, which may be only thirty, forty years. Which is not really very long to build up something very substantial.

**Keturaja:** Are you aware Bhante of any particular areas that we could work on to broaden....

**S:** I don't know because I don't have a close enough contact with Windhorse Trading. I'd need to follow you around for a bit and see you over the days and weeks and months to say that. There is certainly nothing that struck me, I must say that. When I come to see you, you normally look happy and healthy and all that. Quite so. I don't feel it necessary to look any further. If you were all haggard and sad, then I would start worrying and asking why. (laughter)

**Satyaloka:** So the notion of Right Livelihood as something that you do to get your energy moving, or to work on your ethics, or to provide a total situation to begin with, [and that] then you move on to more of a country retreat situation, where you can reflect and meditate, and [go] more deep in[to] the Dharma. You don't take as a necessary...

**S:** I don't see this as necessary and a universally appropriate model of Right Livelihood. There may be some people who already have a deep urge towards the arts or towards meditation. And who definitely

want to pursue that more fully, or whole-heartedly, later on. And therefore come in to a Right Livelihood situation perhaps because they have to. Because they need some way of supporting themselves. But that certainly does not represent a full or adequate model of the Right Livelihood situation.

**Kuladitya:** It's as if there is a lingering view that some of us have, maybe we feel is existent in the Movement, that the retreat centre as it were more monastic life-style is the proper, the ideal life-style for a Buddhist. You know it's as if it creeps around the edges and is something which can be lurking there in the background undermining full commitment to Right Livelihood.

**S:** Well I think it might be ideal for some people, but I don't think it is ideal for all by any means. Well of course it is bound up with the idea of brahmacarya. It's probably easier to observe brahmacarya at Guhyaloka, at least for short periods, than it is when you are on the road because there [are] more stimuli. So there is that sort of consideration. Even that would affect different people in different ways. Some people are violently assaulted by unbrahmacarya-like thoughts and feelings when on solitary retreat, or even at Guhyaloka. And of course sometimes at least when you are on the road you are so busy that you don't have time to think of anything like that. (mild laughter) So particular situations don't necessarily guarantee particular mental states.

**Satyaloka:** Maybe it's one illustration of what you are saying, but there is a view that comes from Kamalasila's book and teaching on meditation, which is that you need [the] pliancy of mind that you get [from] dhyana, to be able to work with your thoughts in a subtle way, to be able to reflect and deepen your level of wisdom.

**S:** Well perhaps he doesn't emphasise the existential situation sufficiently. Or what I call the situation that pushes you to the edge in life itself. Well a bereavement does that. A bereavement may be more helpful to you actually, in the long run, to develop Insight than months and months in a meditation retreat. I think the thing is that you don't lose it. And you have to reflect on it and call it to mind. I've found people very deeply affected by bereavements, and definitely having a degree of insight at least with a small i. One needs to recall that. You may be able to recall it in the retreat sort of situation. There is no reason why you should not recall it at other times.

**Kuladitya:** There may be nothing there that is driving you into that edge, to that extreme. You might be having quite a nice positive happy life-style, floating along perhaps in and out of dhyana, but nothing really pushing you to that existential edge.

**Ruchiraketu:** Again this is where I think work, with its objective dimension is helpful. It does force people to relate about something more objective, and they're less likely to be fooled by some sort of subjective experience. (Bhante agreeing).

**S:** And this is why also the ethical dimension is important. Because your spiritual experiences, your Insights, should have some bearing on your behaviour. You should become more ethical. That is another traditional yardstick. I mean it doesn't necessarily mean conformity, strict conformity, with conventional social ethics. But you should be a more genuinely ethical human being. You should be more kind, you should be considerate, more aware in dealing with other people, more generous, and so on. (long pause)

**Kuladitya:** Going back to the earlier point, about the model that we should look at, in terms of gaining Insight. It sounds a bit like it would be more useful for us to look in terms of koans rather than in terms of samatha, reflection then vipassana. It sounds as if, especially as you mentioned the Japanese link, it sounds as if perhaps we could draw on that koan approach, or the koan model, more than we do.

**S:** Yes. Taking the word koan very loosely, (**Kuladitya:** very broadly) not just the sort of paradox, but the situation in which you are brought right up against it, and are almost forced to break through.

**Kuladitya:** And the thing about that broad koan in that sense is that is something that you can't escape from isn't it. That's partly what seems to make it so powerful.

**S:** Yes... Well the master does not allow you to escape. Possibly even public opinion does not allow you to leave the monastery. Or your own sense of shame doesn't allow you to quit the sesshin.

**Keturaja:** Certainly I think Right Livelihood brings that about. [It] is a deep engagement in what you are doing. You really care, you're really emotionally connected with what you are doing, and as it were that to some extent is the master which keeps you there, on the case.

**S:** There is also the whole aspect of spiritual friendship, which we have not touched upon. You are all working together. You depend on one another. You rely on one another. And the work situation is very important for developing a more virile kind of spiritual friendship. And that as we know, is a very important aspect of spiritual life itself. I mean some people have come back from meditative situations saying that they felt very lonely in those situations. (long pause)

**Vajraketu:** To stick to our programming we need to off cut.

**S:** Yes, it seems appropriate.

**Voice:** It seems a natural break.

**Voices:** Thank you.

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**End of Session One**

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## Session Two

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**S:** So I am not sure what you had in mind here. So maybe you could say something about it first.

**Ruchiraketu:** OK. This is a question about the ideal structure of Windhorse Trading. Although it may even apply more widely to the whole Movement. But particularly here we are thinking of Windhorse Trading, and about what would be the ideal structure for us to aim at. Because for example at the moment the way we are organised is fairly centrally from Cambridge. And then thinking of all the shops around the country, that in some ways they are in a hierarchical relationship. A lot of the initiative, the plans and so forth, tend to arise at Cambridge. And then get communicated down a hierarchy as it were. And as we continue expanding what would be the ideal structure to use. For example we might start encouraging a structure whereby units would become autonomous say after five years. So we'd be supporting them, say a shop, to open in a town or something like this. And we would support it say for five years, until such a time until it could become autonomous. Or we could keep it as it stayed very much part of Windhorse and was very closely tied in.

**S:** So what would autonomy mean? Well supposing there is a shop somewhere. Does that mean it would do all of its own buying? It would have people going overseas to look at products, do everything itself?

**Ruchiraketu:** Well it would have the choice anyway.

**Kuladitya:** They wouldn't have to go overseas would they. They could just buy in England.

**Ruchiraketu:** They could be like any other independent retailer.

**Satyaloka:** They could buy from Windhorse Trading. But just as a supplier in a sense. A favoured supplier. So autonomy could mean, it could be spiritual autonomy, it could be legal autonomy, it could be economic autonomy. It has different aspects to it.

**Ruchiraketu:** We're partly here thinking of the nature of the Movement itself. That the centres are autonomous. But then contrast that say with the Mitra Convenors, who are more centrally appointed as it were.

**S:** Well there is the, as you say, all the different FWBOs are legally and financially autonomous. That is the way we have designed things. But there is only one Order. And in the case of the Order there is a much more centralised structure. (**Ruchiraketu:** Yes) Because well Mitra Convenors are appointed, they are not elected. And Preceptors are appointed, they are not elected.

The Presidents technically speaking, (?) the Presidents of the FWBO centres are elected, but obviously in consultation, though that is extra-legal as it were. It's not a legal obligation (**Ruchiraketu:** Right). So the FWBOs are definitely decentralised. Because though there is for instance the Chairmen's meeting it has no legal standing, and quite deliberately has no legal standing. The Chairmen cannot decide anything. The Chairmen collectively cannot decide anything for the Movement as a whole, for the centres collectively. So that if the Chairmen in a Chairmen's meeting agree to do something it's only a provisional agreement. Each Chairman has to go back to his own FWBO, which means his own council, and get them to agree. And they may agree or they may disagree. That is the position.

But of course the Order is not organised like that, as you know very well. And in fact it does seem to me

at present that, so far as the Order is concerned, we need to develop our centralised structures more. If we've (word unclear) (break in recording) That is becoming more apparent, as I think in terms of handing over my own responsibilities. Because I have got to hand them over to the FWBOs. I can only hand them over to people who are, well, spiritually responsible. That means a comparative minority. And at the same time they will need to have a medium through which they can work. And that's why recently we've set up the FWBO Central. Which doesn't replace the Order Office. It does the work that the old Order Office used to do. But it will be, it will constitute the machinery through which the Preceptors will exercise their responsibilities.

So at present I am thinking more in terms of centralisation. I think we have had enough decentralisation in the Movement as a whole. And I think at present I'm thinking more along the lines of centralisation to achieve more of a balance. So that won't be to the detriment of the already decentralised status of the FWBOs. But it will mean a greater centralisation of other things. Or not perhaps a greater centralisation. They're already centralised. But making them more effectively centralised if you see what I mean.

**Kuladitya:** How do you mean more effectively centralised?

**S:** Well paying more attention to those centralised functions which are at present in a very rudimentary form. And devising a structure which will enable them to be given sufficient attention. Or at least for their attention not to depend on my personal taking of an interest.

**Ruchiraketu:** We were thinking of this issue in terms of wanting to encourage initiative. Well, and responsibility. And that spiritually speaking it could be quite good to encourage people to be autonomous, and taking responsibility. On the other hand then there is also the benefit in being aligned with something which is...

**S:** Well there is the possibility that if say all the shops were autonomous, that they wouldn't be so successful. Because there would be a limited range of people, a limited range of expertise. And they could well be not nearly so successful as they are at present. I think that is quite likely, personally, knowing some of the people involved.

**Ruchiraketu:** Yes, so this is something that we were trying to weigh up. Practically speaking, at the moment anyway, it makes sense for Windhorse to be centrally organised. We were really thinking quite long term what ideally we would be aiming towards. And we could be aiming towards a situation whereby shops would be autonomous with some disadvantages. But it might also lead to more stability in the very long term because there is not as it were one body to fall. There would have to be lots of independent bodies in the event of some sort of economic disaster or something like that.

**S:** I'm not so sure that the parallels prove correct. We know that in the case of an FWBO centre, if one folds up it does not really affect the others except in terms of general morale. But I think the sort of economic situation which would compel the collapse of one of these autonomous businesses, would probably compel the collapse of the others. I doubt that their success or failure, once they are established, is so much dependent on local non-economic factors. Or if they were dependent it would be better to be part of the broader structure. Because they would be under greater strain in so much as they'd have more responsibilities. If for instance a particular local business, a shop, was having difficulties managing its personnel. Well if at that same time they had to deal with an economic crisis of a more general nature. Well the double strain might well be unbearable. But even if they were having to deal with that personnel problem. If you, the big central office, were dealing with the overall economic problems, they wouldn't have to think about that. And you'd have much greater expertise anyway.

**Vajraketu:** This particular aspect that we are going into is only one in a way rather small element of it. But just to clarify one point in here. It's rather the concern would be the reverse of that, that the centre would make a big mistake. Or that the centre would collapse as it were financially, and it would bring

down with it some of the independent... Say we could have some profitable shops but the central business..

**S:** How would the situation arise that the central business collapsed and certain individual shops didn't? What sort of scenario does that envisage?

**Vajraketu:** Well it, no. The individual shops would be brought down by the centre collapsing. Whereas if they were independent they wouldn't need to be. Because at the moment, lets say we made some disastrous mistake in Cambridge. Well the assets of the shops in Brighton and Norwich say belong legally to the central business. So they would become the property of our creditors. So although Brighton and Norwich might be trading profitably, they might have to be closed down because their assets...

**S:** I suppose that's part of the existential edge on which you are... (much loud laughter) Oh yes I see what you mean.

**Vajraketu:** Well actually it would be possible to legally....

**S:** .... Perhaps you could say that the risk is worth taking. Inasmuch as the benefit to the Movement as a whole of the centralised structure is greater than the benefit of an individual shop to an individual centre.

**Satyaloka:** Can you spell out a little bit what those benefits might be.

**S:** Well I think the centralised business is much more effective generally. Well also there is the fact that it can generate large sums of money. Which can be applied to central projects. Which the small shop connected to the centre just can't do.

**Ruchiraketu:** I think there is a broader issue as well of which the financial implications are one. There is also the question here of just the vision of what Right Livelihood is. And again I suppose there are parallels here, just in terms of again encouraging people to develop their own vision, independently, as it were. Or else encouraging people to be part of something larger.

**S:** I would say that Windhorse Trading is only one kind of business. It's an export/import business with retail outlets. That's all isn't it. It's a very limited kind of business. So if people want to develop their own visions, I'd rather encourage them to go into quite different areas. We have had successes and failures in the past. I'd really like to see a thriving building business. Because one of the things that I have emphasised is that Right Livelihood needs to be related to basic necessities. And shelter is one of them. So I would like to see a bit of vision and enterprise in that area.

It doesn't have to be the limited field of import/export and retail outlets for the things which Windhorse is dealing with. I don't see the need for that being duplicated. You get on with that. Your country wide or even world wide import/export business. And leave others to develop their visions in other fields. Though I've mentioned this particular one. And one that we have never even thought of touching before, perhaps we should, is agriculture. Organic farming, agricultural communities. We've not even thought about that. Perhaps for certain good reasons. But we haven't. Can you think of any other businesses that might be set up? Well we have got the restaurants and whole food shops.

**Satyaloka:** Never mind a building business but a property business .

**S:** Yes.

**Kuladitya:** I think hotels would be an interesting area to look into as well. Other service industries which Buddhists ought to be able to do very well. (**S:** Yes) Vegetarian hotels.



**S:** Yes, well I'd emphasise that rather. Well yes encourage people to develop their visions of Right Livelihood and so on. But their's being in completely different fields. So you've explored this one quite well. So let's leave that to Windhorse Trading. Well not encourage others to set up 'Windhorse Trading mark II' as it were. Which would bring them into competition with you anyway. Well you may believe in competition. (laughter)

**Keturaja:** There is a dimension within the vision of the particular life-style, which is I think very well drawn out in Cambridge. You know we have very strong communities, single sex communities. And in the more distant shops, quite a lot of the time, people don't live in communities or they live in houses. And one element of this is how much should we encourage the more independent as it were shops to partake in that vision.

**S:** I think they should be encouraged. Because it's not just a part of the vision of Right Livelihood. It's part of the vision of the Movement as a whole. And centres should be encouraging them. So you could just add to that. That is not your primary responsibility. Perhaps it's more the responsibility of the local centre and the local chapters. But certainly I think if those who work in the shops are living together as well, it does make for a more efficient operation, a more harmonious working together, and greater development of spiritual friendship.

I've seen here a little bit of the Cherry Orchard, and apparently things have greatly improved there in all respects, especially for the people working there, since they all moved, or practically all moved, into one and the same community. And there were great difficulties when they had part time people who weren't really deeply involved. They certainly weren't living in the same community. Living in very different situations. So that the fact that the women were living in the same community has made a big difference. It's the same with Friends Foods. Their work-force is coterminous with their community. And that seems to have been a very big contributing factor as regards their success.

So yes that's to be encouraged I think. Though I would say it isn't your primary responsibility. It's more the responsibility of the local set up, the centre and the chapters who are to encourage that sort of thing. Because the centres usually provide you with your personnel don't they, when you set up newly. So it would be up to the centre just to sort out the most capable and efficient people. And encourage them to live in a situation that is not only positive intrinsically, but especially helpful if they were going to be working together.

**Satyaloka:** You say that it is not our primary responsibility. The fact that we can provide a focus is something that the centre cannot necessarily do. So we could decide in taking on new shops, only taking on those teams that were living together. Because it is our experience that it is much more effective and efficient.

**S:** Well you could indicate that as to be highly desired. But perhaps you shouldn't make too hard and fast a rule. Because then it might be possible, at least initially, to set up shops on a basis which wasn't completely bad. I'm afraid it may sometimes be quite difficult, at a given time, to get together people who were willing and able to live together in a community.

**Satyaloka:** That's tended to be what's happened. Like say in Cambridge. The initial state of affairs was that they didn't want to live together, as far as I understand, and start a community. But having worked together they then built up common links of trust.

**S:** There are of course people with family responsibilities, who wouldn't be able to move into a community anyway. But yes the tendency should be no doubt for the shops to be run by teams of people actually living together. The tendency should be (that) definitely. Without perhaps making a hard and fast rule, to be applied in all cases.

**Satyaloka:** Because that is very much part of our vision. That collective practise. The more to the extent that that's watered down, the less efficacious Right Livelihood practise seems to be.

**S:** So not just less efficient as a business, but less efficacious as a spiritual practise and spiritual way of life.

**Satyaloka:** So that is bound up with this question of autonomy and centralisation. Because with centralisation, if we are offering a vision, the vision is not just of a wholesale/retail business. The vision is emphasising some of those elements which are emphasised elsewhere in the Movement. But in a way we give the wherewithal to do that by giving a focused project. Giving the financial capital for people to set up the communities.

**Ruchiraketu:** It seems from what you said about maybe actually strengthening up some aspect of centralisation, that that is perhaps the answer to our question.

**S:** Because one must bear in mind that initially, and for many years, and maybe still at present, the principal centralising factor has been myself. So when I am not longer around, when I am no longer on the scene, well perhaps there will have to be structures of a more centralised nature. So that is what I have been thinking about quite a lot recently. But not where the FWBOs are concerned. I don't think that we are thinking in terms of a sort of Federation of FWBOs. I think the present arrangements work quite well. But on the Order side of things, with regards to the Movement as a whole, I think we need more centralised structures to keep together the disparate bits and pieces of various kinds.

But we do [need to] bear in mind obviously that the unity is a spiritual unity - it isn't necessarily reflected in a totally centralised organisation. I don't think that is desirable. Well for instance, to side track a little bit, but not quite a side track, when I was in the States I had contact with several other Buddhist groups and Buddhist teachers. One of the things they were very keen to discuss was the question of centralisation. Because most of them have been structured on a totally centralised model. This was especially the case with say the Zen Centre in San Francisco. Their branches were literally branches, and controlled from the centre. And of course that was allied with the Japanese Zen hierarchical structure. With the man at the top having complete authority spiritually, economically, legally, everything. And the man at the top of course until some years ago was Richard Baker. And it proved disastrous. He developed a rather flamboyant life-style, and well became part of the jet set almost you see. And more and more out of touch with the spiritual side of things, and apparently capable and quite ambitious. But it didn't work. Or at least it didn't work spiritually.

So they were asking me what our models were. Whether we were centralised, and I explained our structure. That appealed to them very much. Now I remember how it started. I don't know whether you know the story of how it started? How it came about that we are not a centralised FWBO? That we've got a number of independent FWBOs? Do you know how it started?

**Satyaloka:** A twinkle in your eye wasn't it. (laughter)

**S:** No, I don't know if there was a twinkle or not. (loud laughter) A twinkle in your eye refers to something else. (loud laughter) Which has nothing to do with me. There was a twinkle in your mother's eye before you were born. (loud laughter) No, I remember it very well, very clearly. It goes back to the very early days of the FWBO. And we were then at Archway. We had moved from Sakura to Archway, and there was Sarum House, as Aryatara then was. And there was a sort of sub-committee of the FWBO which ran Sarum House. But what happened was that people at Sarum House complained that there were always delays in deciding things which concerned Sarum House. And they complained about that. It made life rather difficult for them. So we were talking about it in the council meeting, and I said that the solution is simple. They should become a separate FWBO. This suggestion of mine was received with something like horror by some of the other people. (They said) "oh but that is to divide the Movement".

So I thought about it, and it isn't to divide the Movement. Because the people on the spot need to make the decisions in these cases. So let's have a separate Croydon FWBO. Which is what happened. So that was how it started. So then we had two FWBOs.

So when we started up in other places, they were not branches of the original central FWBO. They all were set up as legally and financially autonomous centres. And as such they have always remained. Meanwhile of course the Order had come into existence. And that has remained purely, in a sense it is neither centralised or decentralised, its just an Order, but the running of it has been as it were centralised. That is to say we have one Shabda, one Order Office, we have one convention and so on and so forth, which is for the whole Order. But different Order Members as you know function through different independent FWBOs and so on. So that is how our structure arose. It was quite deliberate. I remember very well the discussion, and the suggestion I put forward, and how it was received.

I am convinced now that that is the best structure for FWBOs. That they should all be independent. So supposing for the sake of argument, and we hope it doesn't happen, that any one FWBO goes to the dogs. It doesn't pull down the rest. If it collapses financially for instance it doesn't affect any other centre. But the Order Members run it in accordance with the general principles of the Movement, and the Order, with reference to other centres, and senior Order Members and so on. But organisationally speaking they are quite autonomous.

**Ruchiraketu:** Well these were the sort of issues we were discussing. Trying to balance the relative merits of autonomy and centralisation.

**S:** In Britain we need I think a bit more centralisation, though without detriment to the existing autonomous status of FWBOs.

**Kuladitya:** And I suppose what we have to learn is how to influence and affect the shops and the situations we set up through Kalyana Mitrata. Whilst at the same time drawing out their own initiative, and encouraging people to feel that they have an effect on things. And that seems to be one of the issues. Letting the people who are working in the shops feel that they can influence things, and that they can have a real effect. Whilst at the same time trying to instil in them the vision that we've got. Yes.

**Ruchiraketu:** I mean a practical example here might be something like; we generally say that six weeks retreat a year is appropriate for people, and some of the shops sometimes haven't been all that happy. I'm generalising or simplifying it a little bit now. They might want more in cases. And with the current organisation we say well, six weeks is what you get.

**S:** I think that is good because there is uniformity. Otherwise you might get a situation, if they were all separate, where for various reasons some shops will give say two months. So they'd be more likely to get people moving there and working there. There would be a sort of competition arising, of not quite a good kind, among the different businesses to offer better and better terms as it were. And you might then lose the whole idea of Right Livelihood. Because you would be trying to attract people, especially ones not finding it too easy to find workers, just by offering easier and easier terms and more and more pocket money.

**Kuladitya:** These are issues which often come up....

**Satyaloka:** ....around needs and support. Again because we have particular (word unclear), the six week retreat (word unclear) approaches to what people's needs are. And what is reasonable and what isn't. Other people have very different ideas and as things stand....

**Kuladitya:**.... we impose a ceiling.

**Ruchiraketu:** And also of course that does take up quite a lot of our time, discussing things like that. And sometimes we thought wouldn't it be better actually if they took responsibility for themselves. As things stand we are still working fairly centrally. That is what got us to think what is the ideal model anyway. Because perhaps if people were taking responsibility for themselves, they would learn what works and what doesn't.

**S:** One could say for instance supposing they were independent, and they were buying from you. They might say we want you not to take such a big profit margin, because we have got to pay our people more, because we need extra staff, because they all want more time off.

**Kuladitya:** That's exactly what we think will happen. (laughter)

**Satyaloka:** Well maybe but..

**S:** Well I think things are better as they are frankly. Also I think there have been in the past some illusions round about Right Livelihood, in the sense of Team Based Right Livelihood. This is what we used to call Co-ops. People used to think that they were easy options. That a Co-op was a place where you did a certain amount of work with a nice friendly atmosphere. There wasn't much pressure. You got a good bit of time off. And that was working in a Co-op.

Some people at least have learnt better. But I think it is still an idea that prevails in some quarters. So I think it is good if you have a more high powered centralised business, which keeps alive the real vision. And prevents you know the individual centres, any of them, functioning or trying to function along those sort of lines. Or encouraging people to join on that sort of understanding.

**Satyaloka:** Just following that particular point a little bit more. It does seem to happen sometimes in some of the shops, that people do feel they are not involved in the decision making, and the decisions that are running the business. They feel depotentiated by that, or it's not fair, or...

**S:** Well remember what Subhuti was saying a while ago. Well of course it's not fair. Just have to accept that. People aren't qualified to decide about everything. As for being depotentiated. I don't even like the jargon. I get very suspicious when I hear words like that. (word unclear) you aren't free to decide. If you were free to decide presumably some people would want to have the whole year off. But that is not a possibility. So I think you can express your need, or your requirement, and ask for that to be taken seriously into consideration. But I don't think you can have personal responsibility for deciding.

This is I think one of the reasons why there have been difficulties in Co-ops in the past. Because the local Co-op has not been able to sort it out. Certain people have got very different ideas. But if there is a more central body which is, so to speak, more impersonal, I think this decision can be more readily accepted. Otherwise someone else says "I need three months off for my meditation", and somebody else in the same Co-op says "what about me I need it for my art work - my art work is more important". "No, my meditation is more important". This is the sort of situation that is sometimes developed. So I think it is easier if it is all well decided, or laid down, by some more central body in the light of the requirements of the total business.

**Satyaloka:** Does this relate at all to the point you made in the new fifteen points about trust. You mentioned about trust.

**S:** That's true yes. I wasn't thinking of that. But that is relevant here indeed. Yes. And especially if some of those at least who were working in the shops are Order Members. They need to trust you, that you have got their interests genuinely at heart. Which no doubt you do have.

**Keturaja:** It does seem as Windhorse gets larger, building that trust from people at the centres point of

view, does require much more effort. Both in time with those people, and clearly explaining why the centre has come up with certain guidelines. We need to be able to clarify the principles on which those guidelines are based.

**S:** But there should be an attitude of trust to begin with. Even if you haven't clarified the principles. There should be an attitude of trust that well yes, you do have the interests of your workers so to speak at heart.

**Kuladitya:** It's a very touchy area isn't it. Especially the support side of things. When people's money and.... there's a difficult interaction between the spiritual side of things, the Kalyana Mitrata side of things, and people's everyday lives. We might be saying we want you to live in a certain way. Or we encourage you. We're encouraging you strongly to have this amount of money. And it does seem to rub people up the wrong way.

**S:** Well I think you could put it in terms of the workings of the business as a whole. So that if we are to function properly as a business, and if we are to produce a certain surplus, a substantial surplus, for the benefit of the Movement as a whole via central projects, then these are the terms on which we have to work. And which we are able to offer you.

**Ruchiraketu:** That is more or less what we have ended up doing several times. Well just explaining that if we were for example to create exceptions in one particular case, well then there's not a lot of reason why we shouldn't create a similar exception all over the place. In which case the whole business would not work. But I think then there are very interesting questions about, in a centrally organised system, how it will work. I'm thinking here about what Keturaja has already mentioned. About developing that trust. Encouraging that trust in other people. Partly by providing information for example.

**S:** Yes that is necessary, obviously. But the point that I am making is that in the case of Order Members, that trust should already be there. You shouldn't really need to have to develop it.

**Ruchiraketu:** I think sometimes some Order Members at the periphery as it were, to use that language, might feel that well, we should have trust in them too. So it's like if they are deciding on some type of particular life-style, for example. Or requirements for life-style...

**S:** But yes you do try. But then the question then arises whether you are able to provide the financial wherewithal. You say yes, I fully agree with your judgement that you need to spend three months of the year devoted to art. Yes we trust that. But sorry we are not able to finance that. (laughter)

**Ruchiraketu:** I've heard something like that before. I think that when we talked about this, I was also involved in the discussions about the mitra system, in my capacity as a Mitra Convenor. We were talking about whether for example the acceptance of mitras will be decentralised back to the chapters. Or whether it would be kept centrally. And we came to the conclusion that it did need to be more centrally organised, so as to maintain common standards. But we also came to the conclusion that that required Kalyana Mitrata in order to function effectively. [Those at] the centre did have a responsibility to communicate to those at the periphery as it were. And those at the periphery also had to have trust in what those at the centre were deciding.

**S:** But that was a little different. Because those at the centre had to communicate requirements in what they want the Order Members, at the periphery so to speak, to do in relation to the mitra. So that has to be communicated. But it is not per se an issue of trust as I have emphasised. Among Order Members there should be trust already, which should be something which you could take for granted. If you can't, then there is something wrong within the Order as such, with regard to particular Order Members as such. (long pause) But yes some life-styles are more expensive than others. Well different people have different ideas about clothes. Some people might think it as quite important to, well, spend a bit of money on clothes. Others just don't bother, just pick up something from a jumble sale. They are quite happy with

that.

**Kuladitya:** We might find our selves in a position of arbitrators about that sort of thing. And then some people will say why have we got the authority to make decisions about that. I suppose again it comes down to....

**S:** Well be very suspicious when anybody uses the word authority. It comes back to what I said before. So you could say that we have the interests of the business as a whole. We are not passing any judgement on whether you should or should not spend money on such and such thing. We are only saying that we are not in a position to provide that money.

**Ruchiraketu:** We were in [that] position some time ago when somebody did actually need to leave because we wouldn't accept her demands. She was a very good worker and so on.

**S:** Well that may sometimes be the case. (long pause). Because quite independently in your personal capacity, you may question whether that person really does need so much money. You're wearing a different hat then. When you wear your Windhorse hat you say sorry we just can't afford that amount of money. Wearing another hat you could say well look I don't think you really ought to be thinking in terms of spending money on that sort of thing. But you have to make clear which hat you are wearing when you speak.

**Satyaloka:** That's partly where the issue gets confused. So with that other hat on, not the Windhorse hat, the Windhorse hat can say I'm sorry we can't afford it, in that other capacity we're just acting as a spiritual friend pointing something out.

**S:** Right, just a fellow Order Member, if it is another Order Member. But when you wear your Windhorse hat you shouldn't say "well I don't think you ought to be spending money on such and such". Wearing your Windhorse hat, you simply say the business can't bear it. Then you take off your Windhorse hat, put on your Kesa, (mild laughter) and you say "well I think it's a really dreadful waste of money. An Order Member just ought not be thinking of spending so much money on that sort of thing. It's dreadful, yes". (loud laughter)

**Keturaja:** It does sometimes seem to be difficult to keep those two hats separate. (**S:** Yes) Even more so with non-Order Members.

**S:** Yes, I appreciate that.

**Kuladitya:** It gives us another existential edge. (loud laughter)

**Ruchiraketu:** I think there is even in that, there is a question of what is Windhorse Trading trying to do anyway? And where do we put the balance, in terms of supporting people individually as it were. And where do we put the emphasis towards, for example creating money for the wider Movement. Because well if we are saying to people "well sorry but the business can't afford it", we are using criteria about where we want to put the money. And that again is where the question might arise, couldn't you just give a little less money to the wider Movement?

**S:** Well that's where the question of centralisation arises. Because the centralised business consults with the centralised Order.

**Kuladitya::** Right. (laughter)

**Ruchiraketu:** That leads nicely onto the next part, Bhante. Which is about the relationship... We've mostly been talking about the relationship, the structure, of Windhorse itself. But there is another section

here to do with autonomy and centralisation. Which is the relationship of Windhorse to the rest of the Movement.

**S:** I'm not sure what one means by relation here. In what sense does it need a collective relation to the rest of the Movement.

**Satyaloka:** We will be managing quite a large amount of resources, marshalling quite a lot of resources, of the Movement in terms of people and money. We are engaged with the shops within us. Within our structure saying we should do this, we should do this. But we need to have somewhere to look to. Somebody to look to, to know that we're.. You know for us to consult with, for us to look for a broader spiritual vision than we have got.

**S:** Well at present you usually consult with me. Then after me, I suppose you will have to consult with those to whom I've handed over my responsibilities, and who represent so to speak the interests of the Movement as a whole, or who think in terms of the Movement as a whole, and are able to see in an impartial way. And who probably wouldn't be connected with, or identified with, a particular centre or Movement or group within the wider Movement. So that they could advise you well look we really do need let us say a better arrangement for preserving our archives, or we need money for financing publications. Which is you know something of use and value to the Movement as a whole. So I think of Windhorse Trading as a resource for the Movement as a whole, rather than for specific sections of the Movement.

I mean there might be someone starting up a new centre somewhere. And he might be looking around for financial backing. But I don't think he should look to Windhorse Trading. I think we should look to Windhorse Trading for financing things which are of concern and value for the Movement as a whole. Not for a particular section, whether a particular FWBO, or other particular sections. Leaving aside the odd exceptional case, where you might bale out a centre. But that would be as it were quite unusual.

**Vajraketu:** You are aware Bhante, I think that usually when we set up a shop connected with a centre, half of the profits (go to the centre).

**S:** Yes I am aware of that. I don't include that. Because they do require a local incentive. This is especially with regard to the Christmas shops isn't it. Because you need to get together a temporary team. And clearly they'll want to think in terms of getting something for their centre. Or their vision might be limited to that centre, especially in the case of non-Order Members. So no, I do know of that. At present the Movement as a whole has no central resource, other than really Windhorse Trading itself. We don't have any investments as a whole, or as an Order, or anything like that.

**Kuladitya:** Do you think that would be a move we ought thinking about making? Investing money for the Movement.

**S:** Perhaps we should, though that may come after a little while. But perhaps we should for supporting the central organs. At present though, the only source is Order fees. But that goes for Shabda mainly. And well there is some support from FWBOs, for the Order Office. But I think that really needs to be increased. Because the Order Office... Which at present looks after the sort of things that I am handling. I work through them. There are only two full time people, and they really need two more. But there isn't the money. But we sort of manage. (long pause) But what about this quantity versus quality, is this connected?

**Ruchiraketu:** Not really, I think that is moving into a separate...

**S:** But quantity versus quality of what? Goods or people or...

**Ruchiraketu:** This is what we should emphasise, in terms of our expansion. That is the expansion of Windhorse. We could be emphasising quantity. And I've got here in brackets money, making more money. Or we could be emphasising quality, and I've got in brackets spiritual practice. So...

**S:** Well why the dichotomy?

**Ruchiraketu:** Err, there is a dichotomy..

**Kuladitya:** ...not ultimately a dual (?) thing but.. There isn't necessarily a dichotomy ultimately is there...(Ruchiraketu:: No, but..) I think in practise there does appear to be, within a certain time scale.

**Sinhaketu:** Perhaps a dichotomy in attitude. Of going for money, or going for spiritual practise.

**Ruchiraketu:** Well I think we work our best to integrate the two, in other words making money as a spiritual practice. What is the nature of this dichotomy? Because I think it is a real one, and I think we need to..

**Satyaloka:** Well giving a practical working out of that, we could only open as many shops as we feel we could give very good sort of back up to, spiritual backup, Kalyana Mitrata, all those sorts of things. Or we could run a chain of franchise shops which could make a lot of money. But wouldn't have all the components of a Right Livelihood practise within it. And those are two extremes within this whole continuum.

**S:** Well I think there is a bit of a lesson from America, in connection with the groups I was mentioning. Because some of them did start going along those lines. And eventually businesses with a franchise from you will break away and become independent. There is nothing to hold them really. There is only the financial interest to begin with. As soon as they can see that they can do better on their own, they will just break away. So I am rather doubtful if the expansion, increase of quantity through franchise, is really a serious option.

**Satyaloka:** You could tie that up legally. I mean Body Shop and things like that. If you weren't trying to operate something spiritual, but you were just operating a business. You could make sure they didn't do that. If maybe what they were trying to do was mix the models.

**S:** The example they cited to me was the famous Greens restaurant. Which in San Francisco was formerly run by the Zen centre. But now is not particularly Zen or Buddhist, nor run by Buddhist people as it was before.

**Kuladitya:** And the profits don't go towards the Buddhists.

**S:** As far as I know not. Though I think there is some tenuous legal tie. Maybe they own the lease of the building, or something like that. But it is quite separate from Zen centre. Not controlled by them and not run along Buddhist lines particularly. Though of course it is still a vegetarian restaurant. But there would be nothing to stop them making it a non-vegetarian restaurant.

**Ratnaketu:** In this case a franchise shop could stop buying exclusively Windhorse gear, and buy other things.

**Ruchiraketu:** Well that is what franchise does, it ties the....

**S:** Well if you could run it without the dangers I've mentioned. And if it was financially profitable. Perhaps it could be considered. What would be the objection. Because if it doesn't require input in the way of Kalyana Mitrata, and you know the people working there were not Buddhists anyway. And would



not be looking for that, you give them a decent means of livelihood. Well why not?

**Satyaloka:** Well because our resources are such that if we put them into that, it would require some of the top, some of the management people, to put their energy into that, which they wouldn't be putting it into the Movement.

**S:** Well if it meant that the top people had to put energy to such extent that the business as a whole suffers, especially if it suffered on the spiritual side, then it wouldn't be worth it.

**Satyaloka:** That's what we are asking because....

**S:** If the ideal balance was disturbed, it wouldn't be worth it just for the sake of the money.

**Vajraketu:** No doubt the specific down side we have in mind is the people who would be required to run that franchise. It's not that they would be spiritually detrimentalised. But people who would be effective Kalyana Mitra's in our centre periphery model, that we were talking about a minute ago, would actually be full time interacting with non-Buddhists, in a skilful and positive way. Which would be no doubt helpful to them, and financially viable. But they wouldn't be available...

**S:** Well then it does seem to be more a question of personnel. Because conceivably you could have enough people working with you to cover both. But you shouldn't open up this franchise operation if it meant people having to work dealing with the franchises, who were really needed in the way of Kalyana Mitrata, for the Buddhist side of the operation. But if you had extra people, why not?

**Vajraketu:** I think practically we are, at the moment at least, are seeing it to a certain extent as... It's not an either or, and both options are not available.

**S:** It's not a question of either giving a hundred franchises, or none at all. You could give one or two here and there, and see how it worked out. And what your human resources were.

**Kuladitya:** In a sense is what we are doing with these charity shops, in a sense I suppose. And pooling resources to handle all that side of things. Which is simply a money making business, not a Buddhist Right Livelihood business. Although it is run on a certain level by Buddhists.

**Ruchiraketu:** I think it is a little bit to do with where do we place the emphasis in our approach. Do we place it towards money, or do we place it towards communicating and encouraging Right Livelihood?

**S:** Again I am not sure where the dichotomy is. Because we place an equal emphasis on all don't we. We try to achieve a balance. And also I think it wouldn't work if you decide that, well, we're not going to bother about making money. We're going to have all the emphasis on Kalyana Mitrata. You might find that even the Kalyana Mitrata didn't quite work in the right way as before. Because well you are trying to make money too. There is a certain edge to the whole operation, which goes over into the Kalyana Mitrata structure as well.

**Vajraketu:** Again this does, on the practical level I think... even amongst ourselves in the management team. We're not completely yet as it were in agreement. We talked a few minutes ago about... Perhaps an ideal model would be where, if there were a group of people, who were already living in a community, who wanted to open a shop in town X. That constitutes a pretty much ideal package for us. We might have another group of people, who don't live together, who also want to open a shop. In fact we might have two or three groups like that. Now given the limitation on resources, we could choose to go with all four if you like. And the argument in favour of that from a spiritual point of view would be that, at least working together, and giving them some rudimentary tools, is better than nothing. Better than the situation that they are in at the moment. Or we could argue, as some people do, [that] there is a level

where, below the minimum, where it isn't good enough. Where it would be better not to do it. Or particularly if it diluted what we could do in some of the existing shops. You know if you take it down to the very practical issues. There are a number of people who can go out and visit the shops. Well if the number of people who do that effectively doesn't increase at the same speed which we open shops, then the number of times in which they could go round, and the quality of what they have to offer, goes down.

**S:** I think probably it is better to err, broadly speaking, on the side of the ideal. Bearing in mind that the natural tendency of any group or Movement is to degenerate. (mild laughter) Do you see what I mean?

**Kuladitya:** The ideal? Which ideal though? The ideal of lots and lots of money?

**S:** Not go after say money, at the expense of the other factors.

**Ruchiraketu:** So err on the side of developing spiritual links and Kalyana Mitrata.

**S:** Yes, if there is a choice. Or if you are forced into a choice.

**Kuladitya:** Yes, well I suppose our... I think that we all agree that our goal is to go beyond that apparent dichotomy. So that we get... Whilst maintaining a certain quality of spiritual life, we get the maximum quantity of money. I think that is definitely a koan. But it's a question of where we draw the line, and I think the economics....

**S:** This is obviously difficult to state exactly where you draw the line in theory. If for instance, in a meeting of yours after serious discussion, half of you are of one opinion, and half of the other. Well it probably doesn't matter either way. There is nothing to choose. You might as well decide it by tossing a coin (laughter) and not argue any more. (much laughter) Have you heard me quote Dr Johnson on the subject of making money? He calls it getting money. By getting money he means making money. He said that "a man is rarely so innocently employed as when he is getting money". He didn't mean by hook or by crook. (laughter) He meant just in the way of ordinary business. He didn't mean getting money or making money, by all costs. No, he was referring the normal, honest, business life. "A man is rarely so innocently employed as when he is getting money", or making money.

**Ruchiraketu:** It keeps people out of mischief.

**S:** Yes, that is more or less what he was saying. Away from dissipation and idleness, laziness. Then if you have a copy of Boswell, look it up. Look in the index under money. Try to find the exact quotation.

**Vajraketu:** This discussion we were just having there; it does seem to me a bit of a difficult one to generalise about. But it is actually for us an extremely live one, practically. Because within arguable parameters, we could go and open shops in some place where they would be less than an ideal. But some would argue better than nothing.

**S:** But also there is I suppose the fact that if they were less than ideal, the whole situation was less than ideal, you run the risk of losing whatever money you might have invested. Because don't you help them to set up. (**Vajraketu:** Oh yes). Well also there is the question of your time and energy.

**Ruchiraketu:** I think you've begged the question a little bit by saying less than ideal. Because you probably mean less than ideal from a Right Livelihood point of view. When they would be okay as far as money would be concerned.

**Kuladitya:** But the question still needs to be begged doesn't it. How long would they be okay financially if they are not okay from a Right Livelihood point of view?

**S:** They need not be. Because I mean we know in the world outside, the naughty world outside, lot of enterprises are remarkably successful. And apart from being even ethical... It depends on the sort of people you have. How high powered and capable they are in a particular field. Anyway we are unlikely to get people like that working in one of our humble Christmas shops.

**Satyaloka:** It's probably more an issue of watering down what we can offer at the moment. Rather than setting up an operation that is less than ideal. It is more, we could do five shops next year, or we could do two. If we do five that is stretching us. And it will stretch our capacity to support those shops. Or we could do two comfortably. Where do we put that balance?

**S:** Well it depends on the nature of the stretching. If the stretching gives you a nervous breakdown well obviously it is not good. Well if it just braces you in a healthy sort of way, (much laughter) well fair enough. Only that I mean no hard and fast rules are going to be laid down.

**Vajraketu:** It's things like.. We've over the years learnt some things about team dynamics for example. And we can help teams through various stages of development as a team. But if you were to put a time on that, lets say you opened three shops in a year. You could help them to, on average, to point A in twelve months. If you opened six next year, it might take you two years to get them to point A. It's issues in that area that are...

**S:** As a general statement I think I would say that well, the Movement as a whole is not functioning at it's optimum capacity. By a long chalk. Most Order Members could do more than they are doing. And therefore could be stretched more than they are stretching themselves at present. Well on the whole, I've said this more than once before, we do have quite an easy time in this country certainly. Perhaps that doesn't apply to Windhorse quite so much as to some other aspects of the Movement. Speaking of the Movement as a whole we're a pretty easy going Movement I think. Well people take weekends off don't they, almost automatically without even thinking about it. I noticed it when I was at the LBC. It seemed to close down at weekends. Leaving aside the fact that yes maybe there are weekend retreats on, but not always. Well I usually carry on over the weekend. It's very frustrating ringing around, and always getting answer phones. Normally over the weekend the only place I ever get a reply from is the Order Office. They also function over the weekend. Otherwise it is sometimes very frustrating. The whole Movement seems to close down over the weekend. So what are they doing? Well some are on retreat. But not all I'm sure. (long pause) Well obviously I can not make much comment on matters of detail. I can only help maybe clarify more general principles.

**Ruchiraketu:** I think the point of erring on the side of the ideal is a useful point.

**S:** Well in view of the fact that, unless they are manned entirely by stream entrants, all organisations and Movements will have an in-built tendency to degenerate. So err on the side of adherence to the ideal, if you have to err at all. (long pause)

**Vajraketu:** I was thinking that there was somewhat of a parallel to running a centre. I suppose you would have the same tension between wanting to go out and teach as many people as possible, on the grounds that a little bit of metta bhavana spread very widely is a good thing. Set against...

**S:**...having your teachers collapse, burnt out at the end of the year. And not be able to do any teaching at all.

**Vajraketu:** (mild laughing) Well no. I was thinking of the alternative to that being concentrating more on a dozen bright people. And then you stop teaching the metta bhavana as widely as possible, and concentrate on bringing those twelve bright people along. No doubt a case could be made for both. (long pause)

**S:** Someone once told me that in India there were two kinds of gurus. Those who are rather easy going and have lots of disciples, and those who are strict and have very few. (laughter) (long pause) So it does seem that it was the Zen people who developed that idea, I should say Ch'an and Zen people, because I think it started in China. I was talking about this recently. And I was recalling the fact that in India if someone gets a little education, perhaps gets a small job in a government office, he regards himself as a member of the middle classes. He will not do any physical work. He will not even carry his own suitcase to the station. It's degrading. He will hire a coolie to do that. That is the general attitude towards work.

**Vasubandhu:** Is that why it was such a big thing when Gandhi started to do spinning?

**S:** ...and not only spinning, cleaning toilets. Well the caste thing came in there. So it's not surprising that we don't have in the Indian tradition at least... Well in the Buddhist tradition as a whole, there is no serious consideration being given to this whole question of Right Livelihood. Just this short list of ways of earning your living which were considered unethical, and that was that. That you shouldn't manufacture and sell poisons, you shouldn't manufacture arms, shouldn't be a butcher...

**Ratnaketu:** Well isn't it a limb of the Eightfold Path? Why was it there?

**S:** Well according to me, the Buddha himself realised the importance of the economic side of existence. And sketched the bare outline of what Right Livelihood was. But whereas they (words unclear) elaborating the metaphysics. They never bothered to elaborate the Buddha's economics. So that you had the Indian equivalents of maybe Plato and Aristotle, or Hegel and Nietzsche. But you never had the Indian equivalent, or not the Buddhist equivalent, of Adam Smith. In the Indian tradition there was some discussion of economics under the heading of Artha Shastra.

**Kuladitya:** So it was an almost feudal, medieval, system of economics for so long that there is not a lot to discuss in a way.

**S:** There wasn't really much to discuss I suppose. (**Kuladitya:** In a way). But they could have discussed it more I am sure.

**Kuladitya:** Well there is livelihood as well, and attitudes to work as practice, rather than economics.

**S:** And also don't forget that in the case of Hinduism, the caste system... I mean you were born in a certain family and did a certain work, the hereditary family work, the caste work, because of your karma. So your work was your dharma. So if there was any view upon work as a spiritual practise, this is still the view of many Hindus, well spiritual practise consists in performing your caste, including your work, duty. Because that has been divinely ordained. If you are born into a family of leather workers, well be a leather worker. That is your dharma, in a way. It's part of your caste duty. So perhaps in that caste dominated environment, the conception of Right Livelihood couldn't really flourish. It was predetermined.

**Satyaloka:** So you do see this as fertile ground for new expositions of practice in the West.

**S:** Well in the East too. Because now it is highly relevant to our friends in India. Our ex-untouchable friends especially. They used to be told that well you are untouchables because of your past karma. And well it's your duty just to carry out the work traditionally assigned to an untouchable. They were emancipated from that, so what work do they do? If their work is not determined by their caste, and their karma, what is it determined by? But then comes in the question of Right Livelihood. First of all livelihood then Right Livelihood.

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## End of Session Two

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## Session Three.

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**S:** There is something here about 'give what you can, take what you need'. We didn't go into that did we? Well do we need to? Is it clear or not clear? 'Give what you can, take what you need.'

**Vasubandhu:** I can't remember the context that it came up in.

**S:** I think the heading here is 'life-style'.

**Ruchiraketu:** That's right. I think there is quite a big area here actually, Bhante. In practical terms anyway. One of the things that we've discovered is that, in talking to people about what they need, almost the language seems to encourage the wrong approach. People start thinking about all the things that they need.

**S:** Well maybe one can phrase it negatively. Don't take what you don't need.

**Satyaloka:** We're just wondering whether.. The language is from Marx, I understand.

**S:** Oh yes. It was originally, yes.

**Satyaloka:** Whether it's not Buddhist. Whether the actual spirit of it is appropriate.

**S:** Well, I think just taking the sentence as it stands, the statement is quite valid. But I think the difficulty comes in, as you mentioned, when people start adding up, or trying to add up, what they think they need. Perhaps confusing needs with wants or desires. The word 'need' is not really adequate by itself I suppose. Because need for what? Need to live? Or what do you mean by live? Is it just need to survive, need for a decent human life etc, etc. Maybe that needs further defining.

**Kuladitya:** Because once someone has used that framework. And said this is the list of what I need. Then to challenge it, your challenging what they need. So there is an acceptance somewhere that they really do need those things. Well the person presenting it as their needs, so it makes it quite an emotive issue...

**S:** Yes, are you to tell me what I need? In other words one really has to establish that there is an objective criterion. That it isn't just subjective. In other words your needs aren't simply what you think you need, necessarily. So what is the objective criterion? I have mentioned, I think several times in the past, the case of bhikkhus... You could take this as a sort of starting point. They were entitled to expect from the lay supporters four things; food, shelter, clothing and medicine. The Sarvastivadins later added books. (laughter). In the Buddha's day there were no books, obviously.

**Kuladitya:** And we have added videos now. Because there weren't videos in the Buddha's day. (mild laughter)

**Satyaloka:** But even there Bhante, with that list of basics... Somebody say for instance from the community... We maybe live on ten pounds a week, twelve pounds a week on food. People obviously living on their own have higher needs. But then some people say they need twenty five pounds a week for food which seems...

**S:** Well sometimes it depends on how good they are as managers. What sort of foods they buy. We were talking about this a bit at Padmaloka the other day. Because down in London I sometimes do a bit of shopping on the weekend. Paramartha and I look after our own lunch. Because there is no Cherry Orchard on Saturday and Sunday. I've been surprised recently how cheap fresh vegetables are. So if you go and buy cheap vegetables, and cook yourself, well it doesn't cost you very much. If you go and buy Chinese take-away, or something like that, or some sort of fast food, which you heat up, it's much more expensive. So there were these considerations also.

**Satyaloka:** The point was, even with basics like food, how do you define what you need? Somebody can define that in quite a different way.

**S:** Well presumably objectively, it is to be related to health. And people don't eat healthily. Again I was reading a report about people in Scotland having the least healthy diet in Britain. And having the greatest susceptibility to heart attacks and cancer, the two things being linked, the diet and the disease. And you can see around Bethnal Green how people eat. And how overweight they nearly all are. Despite Friends Foods. You can see young women who are just like this. (Bhante makes a gesture so as to be fat). They can't all be glandular. (laughter) You see they're eating as they walk along. They're eating chips. You often see people walking along and eating in Bethnal Green. Munching chocolate bars and all sorts of things. So the food that you need objectively, is the food that enables you to live healthily, to be physically healthy. I think that is something that we need to look at, that communities need to look at, whether they are eating healthily.

**Ratnaketu:** There is also things like cosmetics. There are so many other things which... But I really noticed it coming into the environment, from living in London, was that it's a very rich diet. There is not shortage of good food in communities.

**S:** Good food in the real sense you mean?

**Ratnaketu:** Well in both senses actually. You know the good thing about it is actually that it costs very little. Because there are so many people, and it's sharing and that. Nobody living in a community could complain about the food.

**Kuladitya:** I wonder if we are, because of the multiplicity of different living situations in the Movement, we've got enough of a vision of what our simple life ought to be like? What it ought to consist of? There seems a lot of room to blur the lines. I don't know if we've really got a strong enough idea of what our standard of living should be, in a way, in the Movement. Do you think we need to explore that more?

**S:** I think people do need to look at the question of healthy eating. I mean people look at it to some extent. But I think they need to look at it still more. White bread, that's not very good for you is it.

**Vasubandhu:** It's got calcium. (laughter) Brown bread doesn't have calcium, on the whole.

**S:** And what about fresh vegetables and fruit? Apparently in Scotland people eat almost no fresh vegetables or fruit.

**Satyaloka:** I'm surprised that's a concern. Travelling around the communities I don't get that impression.

**Kuladitya:** Bhante is not necessarily talking about communities.

**Satyaloka:** Not necessarily Scotland, but concern for people in the Movement. I thought the standard of cooking has improved quite a lot.

**S:** I think it has improved. Yes I've noticed this in Sukhavati, and certainly at Padmaloka. It's not equally good everywhere. So this is just one basic necessity. So if someone thinks that food expenses run to thirty to forty pounds a week, well you need to look into that. You will probably will find that they eat out far more than they really need to. Or they buy the wrong sort of things, or they spend too much money in the delicatessen.

I remember an experience I had when I was staying at the Hampstead Buddhist Vihara, of course in the early sixties. And I had several Sinhalese and Thai monks staying with me. I remember then the cost of living in terms of pounds, was far less than it is now. I went of for ten days on a retreat. And while I was away, two bhikkhus ran up a bill of ninety two pounds at the local delicatessen. (laughter) Ninety two pounds in those days! This is thirty years ago. I remember the exact figure because I had to pay the bill. (laughter) Owing the vihara ninety two pounds in ten days. Just one delicatessen. The one up the road.

**Vajraketu:** Did they do their shopping before twelve o'clock? (mild laughter)

**S:** Well I think one of them wasn't bothering very much about that. So that is the sort of thing we mustn't do. And then there is clothing. I mean quite a few people do buy second hand clothes don't they. They go to jumble sales. You can spend a lot of money on clothes. And clearly you need to dress warmly, whatever, according to the season. You need to look reasonably decent, especially if you are going in front of the public. But if you want, I don't even know what they are, expensive Italian suits or whatnot, well clearly that is not a need in our terms.

**Kuladitya:** Another area where I think we have had a few conflicts... We don't want to give the impression that all the time we are having trouble with everybody about how much money they should spend, because a lot of the time things are very amicable. But there are certain little conflict areas that we seem to come up against. One of them perhaps is when people are asking for... They say a type of therapy is their need.

**S:** Ah yes I can see. I think this is a very grey area. Well because people have got a lot of faith in therapies. And they seem to want to explore them. Sometimes (words unclear) it is like they are asking for a certain type of attention through the therapy. And these alternative therapies can be very expensive. Also of course in the Movement as a whole, there is a sort of distrust of orthodox medicine. Some of it quite rational, some of it not so rational. So it is assumed that if you are in the FWBO, well of course you would prefer to go to alternative therapy. Which of course is more expensive. What occurs to me is that you really need to work out an average support. And grant that without any question. But if people want more than that, because they claim that they have certain special needs, they have to justify that.

**Satyaloka:** They have to justify that?

**S:** But I don't think it would be good, or even very practical, to have to sit down with every single person and work out with them a list of their needs, and tot up how much it would cost. Just say that this is what we normally give people. If people do need more. And we are satisfied that it is a genuine need, well we can give you that. But you have to agree that it is a genuine need. You can't just take their word for it so to speak. Because they may have strong feelings on the matter. But the feelings may not be very rational.

**Satyaloka:** That's pretty much the model that we use. We do say that needs aren't worked out in isolation. There has to be a dialogue. We have a basic standard which is your rent, your food etc, etc. But when we do say well, present your needs, you do always get a list covering a whole range of items.

**S:** I don't think that you need to go into the whole (word unclear). Supposing for the sake of argument, you give someone a support of fifty pounds a week. Well if you take on someone, you give them that automatically. You don't go into how they are to distribute it among their various needs. But if they want more than that, then it has to be gone into.

**Satyaloka:** Then that is not needs based. That basic is like a wage that you are offering. A basic package.

**S:** No. Because it is sufficient to meet average needs.

**Kuladitya:** We worked that out.

**S:** But you worked that out.

**Kuladitya:** It's what we do in Cambridge isn't it. It is interesting, there is a double method going on. I mean in Cambridge people join us. We give them a basic support. We don't discuss what people's needs are. And if they have something that is special, they come to us. Whereas for people not in Cambridge, or not in the wholesale bit of Cambridge, for some reason we've gone into another system which perhaps provokes...

**S:** Well it could be perhaps, I don't know, perhaps because people outside Cambridge are not so likely perhaps to be living in communities. And therefore there is greater differentiation.

**Satyaloka:** There are a lot more exceptions.

**Vajraketu:** In Cambridge we are supported much more collectively. The community is supported, rather than the individual. In a community for example, the business tends to pay money into the food kitty.

**S:** You may find on average that you are giving per head, less than you give people outside Cambridge.

**Vajraketu:** Very much so.

**S:** And it might not be a bad thing if you let that be known.

**Satyaloka:** I think we do that. But I mean part of that is that we do live collectively. And that was the thing we touched on yesterday, of encouraging that sort of collectivity in community.

**S:** But if your workers outside Cambridge don't or can't live collectively. Well clearly you have to make allowance for that when calculating your average support. Because the average support of a person living on their own will be higher than that of people living in a community.

**Satyaloka:** You say that there are strong feelings involved, and you need to... Somebody might feel that's their need. But you have to really get down to what their need is. But it is quite difficult to establish that.

**S:** And also think in terms of the overall objectives of the business.

**Keturaja:** You seem to be saying yesterday, in this regard, that it was good to separate out having a Windhorse hat on. Which defined the more general limitations of the vision, the business as a whole. And if you are going into someone's needs you'd more put your Order member hat on.



**S:** Well when wearing your Windhorse hat, you only say what the business can afford. Because even if you have genuine needs, it isn't necessarily able to meet that, in the interest of the business as a whole. So putting on your Windhorse hat you say "well no sorry, we can't support you to that extent". Then putting on your other hat, whatever it is, your personal hat, you say "yes well I really appreciate the fact that you do need that amount of money", so on and so forth. Or you have that particular interest that you want to follow. Someone may want to do a bit of art, and might want to buy very expensive pigment and so on and so forth. You may not be able to stretch to that.

**Keturaja:** It does seem to me that when I have talked to people about their needs, which did not seem appropriate, then it was very much about clarifying the principles on which we are working. And trying to help the other people see what those principles are. Which was more a friend, Order Member, sort of hat than a Windhorse hat. Though of course it is very much related. It's quite difficult to separate the two.

**S:** Well one of the things that I have noticed is that people can be very very subjective. Well someone might say, "well you know all my life I have never been able to wear good clothes. So I think it necessary for my self confidence, which would be useful for the business, that I dress very well. Therefore I need you know several hundred pounds extra".

**Vasubandhu:** You've got to express your self metta haven't you.

**S:** Well it ties up with what I said in my recent fifteen points about misuse of the development model. You should quote Oscar Wilde to them. Oscar Wilde said something to the effect that, I can do without necessities, it's the luxuries I can't do without. (laughter) This says how subjective it can be. One man's necessities are another man's luxuries.

**Ruchiraketu:** That's why we've got the word life-style, because a life-style sets a general set of parameters. Then one is working within those. And if we've set a life-style of communal living, and even work for the Movement, as being quite a central part of our lives, [then] that sets all the parameters quite differently to somebody who wants to support themselves reasonably well, but they are not so committed to the Movement. Or not so committed even to a community life-style for example.

**S:** One can't have one eye on standards outside the Movement. One can't have one's eye on standards outside the Movement because they are completely different. There shouldn't be any attempt to compare, really.

**Kuladitya:** I've quite often come across people saying, well outside I can get two hundred pounds a week. We should be able to pay that sort of thing in the Movement. We have to come back saying we're trying to do something different.

**S:** If the worker has one eye on standards outside the Movement, that will only lead to confusion. If you want to live according to those standards, well perhaps you are not ready for Right Livelihood.

**Kuladitya:** Yes, because it can be seem as a failing of Right Livelihood that we can't, in inverted commas, 'support' people.

**S:** Well where do you stop? Suppose someone says "right, well I want to buy a house. So you have got to enable me to take up a mortgage. I really need my own car etc, etc. Well I want to buy my girlfriend an expensive engagement ring, because she says all her friends have got one". There is really no end.

**Ruchiraketu:** We haven't had the engagement ring one yet. The questions of mortgages and cars has come up though.

**S:** Well engagement rings come next. (laughter) Give way on the cars and the mortgages and you see.

(laughter) You'll be paying for the wedding next. (laughter) And the reception.

**Kuladitya:** The children's education through private school.

**S:** We have a little bit of this in India for quite different reasons don't we.

**Ratnaketu:** I think a lot of it comes down to not understanding what Right Livelihood is about, and therefore trying to compensate. Because here I am sacrificing my life for this, worthy cause though it is, but I am sacrificing my life. Therefore I need to be compensated, money thrown at me every now and again.

**Ruchiraketu:** I think this also very much illustrates that in Cambridge, anyway, it's not just the work; it's the whole supporting structure with the retreats, the communities, all that. It's all part of one package. But I sort of think that package isn't really explicated in much detail. I mean it's sort of generally implied by our ideals and so on. Again I think that is one of the reasons why there is...

**S:** Perhaps you need to bring out a booklet which you give to people. A twenty, twenty five page booklet on Windhorse Trading and it's whole relationship to Right Livelihood.

**Ratnaketu:** Would there be any virtue in giving people the money to pay the rent in the community, to pay the food, the electricity and all that.

**Kuladitya:** That isn't the issue we have come up against very much. Not very many people talk in terms of... Sometimes people say "I want to feel responsible for 'my money', and so therefore pay it all to me, and I will pay my rent."

**Ratnaketu:** No. It's not so much that, as thinking, well, making people aware... On the one hand responsibility for things like that, but on the other hand, actually it does cost money to live in a community. It's not free.

**Ruchiraketu:** It's very complex to administer something like that. It's a lot easier to do it the other way. But even within the 'give what you can take what you need', I still think in some ways we don't really apply the principle quite like that. Because if some people have got, for example, private money, or something like that, they still get the same support as everybody else.

**S:** Then that does raise the issue of common purse. I think there are very few communities in the Movement which have a common purse. There are one or two, I think men's communities. Otherwise people really do like to have their own money. So, to take an extreme case, you might take on a millionaire. But you wouldn't say, "look here, you've got all that money in the bank. You know we ought not to have to give you anything. Because you don't have any needs which are not being met already". But we don't really pursue that, do we. As far as I know.

**Ratnaketu:** It is an interesting situation. Because then that person could, you know, wear very expensive things, and etc.

**Ruchiraketu:** It's just that I think that, although we do have this 'give what you can take what you need', it's actually a very rough and ready way that we apply it. And there are quite a lot of exceptions.

**S:** Within certain limits.

**Ruchiraketu:** Within certain limits. And I think there is even a consideration, a practical consideration again, if for example some team is going to run a profitable shop, then we can be more generous in assessing what needs are.

**S:** You have to be really careful, otherwise it comes down to simply bribery.

**Ruchiraketu:** Exactly.

**Voice:** A lot of business is about bribery.

**Satyaloka:** But practically, the situation may arise that if you really need somebody say to run a business, it's quite difficult to recruit people then. You will take people on with higher support, needs, because the business will...

**S:** But then you should be just clear what you're doing. Or we'd just be... We talked the other day about hiring people's skills, people who are not part of the Movement, and therefore not part of the Team Based Right Livelihood as such. You would be just hiring them as long as you needed them.

**Satyaloka:** No I wasn't so much talking about that Bhante. But if, because of resources or whatever, to keep a business established, or for it to run... The people who are available have higher needs, so we are prepared to pay for them in that situation because...

**S:** Well if they are genuine needs you don't depart from principles. But if they are not genuine needs, if you just give them the money because they are demanding it, and well you need their services, then you are departing from principles to some extent. And you have to decide in each individual case, whether that is justified in the interests of the business as a whole.

**Satyaloka:** I was speaking generally more in terms of the Windhorse hat that, can the business afford it? That is flexible according to the situation as well.

**S:** Because afford is a relative term.

**Ruchiraketu:** Yes.

**S:** One year you may be able to, another year not.

**Kuladitya:** And in one situation we may be able to, another situation not. We do compartmentalise. And it's true we couldn't afford it, that higher price, in every situation. So we do have to juggle like that.

**S:** Well in some situations you may actually need to, for the sake of the business as a whole, if the situation is very serious, and you need that person's skill or expertise. But I think you just have to be clear what you're actually doing. If you are compromising ever, well be clear that you are compromising. But for that reason end it as soon as possible. Well sometimes it may not be compromise, it may be just acceptable degree of flexibility.

**Satyaloka:** Would you consider therapy a need.

**S:** Oh dear, it would depend on the individual case. Yes I've know people go through four, five, six different kinds of therapy. All to no avail. And when it comes to health. Sometimes people get quite desperate. They want to try almost anything. This is a quite difficult sort of situation. And yes, alternative therapies are expensive, whether it is acupuncture or homeopathy, whatever.. Physiotherapy.

**Kuladitya:** At the moment our general principle is that we encourage people to pay for half.

**Voice:** Is that still what we do in the shops?

**Kuladitya:** We have done that certainly in the Cambridge mandala. Where if someone has wanted to do some alternative therapy, we got them to pay something towards it out of their own support.

**S:** I think that if there was any continuous treatment, I don't think they would be able to afford half, from what I've heard of therapies. They cost. It would bankrupt them. They wouldn't be able to manage. You'd have to take on much more than half, assuming they didn't have any savings. I know people who have gone for a particular therapy, and it's forty pounds a time, perhaps twice a week. Supposing that goes on for a few months.

**Satyaloka:** I think just to clarify that, I mean we tend to say well, alternative therapy can be looked at in the case where there isn't an allopathic option. Where it is something a bit more concrete like a back has gone out, that is much more tangible to deal with. Whereas if somebody's having acupuncture, because they have got flu, or their energy level isn't (word unclear), we don't tend to be so sympathetic to that. Or where they do want to pursue (it). Then we want them to take some responsibility for that. Because it is so expensive if the business is paying for it. They need to be aware of the costs involved.

**S:** Because it has been said... Well it is known that, say, under the National Health service, far more people were going to Doctors with very minor trifling complaints when they didn't have to pay. And that was sending the National Health bills right up. Whereas if they had to pay for themselves, they never would have gone. Well if they don't have to pay, they often just go along. It hits me really (as) quite trifling and unnecessary. But if you have to pay yourself, you do think about it more seriously, more often than not.

**Satyaloka:** In fact people quite often seem to go along. And I've asked them "is it improving things? (Are you) getting better?" Well I'm not quite sure.

**S:** Yes, well sometimes one isn't. It's sometimes difficult to tell. I was having physiotherapy for my foot tendon, which was giving me trouble for weeks and weeks. And I couldn't tell whether it was getting better or not. Fortunately I wasn't paying. (laughter) The kind ladies were giving me free treatment. But you have a little relapse one day, it's worse than for the last week, and you think "oh dear, maybe the treatment isn't doing it any good". It's not always easy to tell. Well sometimes you do need to try different kinds of treatment. Again one of my friends tried several alternative therapies, after exhausting allopathic options, for what he thought was liver trouble, and was researching these different treatments, and taking these different treatments, some of them quite bizarre, for about two years. But eventually discovered there was an allergy to gluten in wheat that was causing the trouble. So the remedy was simply not to take wheat products. You could say that all the money spent on therapies previous[ly] was wasted. But he explored all those options before finding out that it was just the gluten in wheat. He had an allergy to that. At least he was pretty certain that is what it is. So it is not an easy business, and people do get quite desperate if something is bothering them for a long time, and they can't solve the problem, can't cure themselves. They are willing to try anything, however expensive, and one can sympathise with that, though one may not necessarily be able to bear the cost of it.

**Kuladitya:** So there is a principle we can apply. A sympathetic hearing but being financially realistic about the needs of the business as well.

**S:** And also get as much on the National Health as you can. I don't know quite how it works, well they've made various changes. Whether there is still a lot one can get in that way. The poor Americans are in a much more difficult situation than we are. One of the things that did surprise me on my, not this last visit to the States, but the previous time, was what a big heavy burden it is, their responsibility for their own medical treatment. How much the private insurance costs them. Someone earning very modestly told me he had to pay out two hundred dollars a week or something like that. And some of our own friends there not even able to afford dental treatment. So any other question connected with needs? I haven't really solved any. You seem to have worked out some rough and ready solution already, by rule of thumb.

**Kuladitya:** We were hoping you would tell us never to give anybody money if they ask for it. (laughter)

**S:** Well, consider their request.

**Ruchiraketu:** I think there is probably still a question of common purse. Well inasmuch as people do have different amounts salted away or whatever, it does really affect the whole idea of 'give what you can, take what you need' I think. In some ways, well I think it undermines it as a realistic criterion, or a realistic method of evaluating.

**S:** Yes because what you have, as you say salted away, really does have to be taken into consideration when considering your needs.

**Ruchiraketu:** That's right, and I think for practical reasons we don't go into that.

**S:** Perhaps for psychological reasons. Because for some reason in our society, well people have become a bit shy about money, and how much they've got and how much they are worth. It isn't like that in India of course. It used not to be like that in Britain, but in the last few generations it seems to have become like that. Well I suppose that money is power, [and] of course you don't want others to know what power you have, or don't have, more often than not. And in the old days an aristocrat wouldn't mind people knowing that he didn't have any money. Because it didn't affect his position in society.

**Kuladitya:** Presumably in India you would want people to know how much money you had. Because it shows what a success you are. We're a bit more cagey, certainly in England, about it. Showing standing isn't it.

**Ruchiraketu:** I suppose what I'm getting at here, is just that our concept of what our ideal is, is not that clear in practice.

**S:** I think that even if one doesn't have a common purse, if someone as it were applies to join the business, the team. One could even raise this question "look, do you have any other resources?" And if they say "yes I do have", suppose I say I have ten thousand pounds in the bank, well you could put it to them "well don't you think we need to take that consideration when determining your level of support?" Just put it to them like that. I mean just put it to them that perhaps they ought to draw, at least to some extent, on that while working with you, in view of the ideals of the business as a whole. Not make it an absolute requirement, at least not to begin with. But at least ask them to consider that, and see what they say. They might well say well "look, okay, I will just take half of what I would otherwise have taken. Fair enough".

**Ruchiraketu:** Yes I think that position would be more true in way to our principles. Even if it's a bit more difficult to apply. One doesn't want to be discouraging people by saying "pay for yourself as well".

**S:** But in the past people have done that haven't they?

**Vajraketu:** Only a subtle refinement, rather than a counter, to your point, but to my knowledge or understanding, where people who work for us do have their own resources, they only take the minimum, the basic support. I mean you could argue they should take less than that, but there's somebody who lives in Sweden, she's got a little bit of money, and you could argue she has a need to go back to Sweden. But because she has got money she pays to go herself. Now you could argue that if she didn't have money, that we would have to pay it. But she doesn't come and say, because it's a need to go back to Sweden, I think the business ought to pay, because she has resources of her own. So that's it's a bit of a (**Kuladitya:** halfway house), perhaps not half way. But that story is repeated with four or five other people who have got money, and don't come to us for extras that they might do if they didn't have money. You know they

pay for their own Alexander lessons. Where it gets greyer is because they've got the resources... I don't think people do fly to the Bahamas for holidays, but they could.

**Kuladitya:** By not tackling the issue, does that mean we're perhaps not taking the opportunity to, on a spiritual friendship side of things, to... If someone is free to pay for their own Alexander Technique lessons for instance, well does that mean that we won't go into the arena and question whether that is a real need of their's, spiritually speaking.

**S:** Well supposing they do fly to the Bahamas, because they can afford it, and don't need to ask you for the money. Well, how does that effect their relationship with others working in the business who aren't able to afford a holiday in the Bahamas, and don't feel they should ask the business to finance that?

**Vajraketu:** I think that is not a very good analogy there...(tape cut off)

**S:** ....the teachings of the Buddha which have not been elaborated in the East, but which may be elaborated in the West.

**Satyaloka:** I think we quite often say that to the shops. That it is a teaching, that we are on the cutting edge in a way, in the Movement, of developing and working out what Right Livelihood is really. I mean your teachings are....

**S:** ... quite sketchy. Because my expositions of the Eightfold path were very, very early. Some of them even before the FWBO was started. I had to leave something for all of you to work out. (laughter)

**Kuladitya:** I wonder if there isn't an important matter of principle to do with Buddhism and Right Livelihood. Right Livelihoods as a counter balance to the tendency to indifference and withdrawal.

**S:** That's true.

**Kuladitya:** If Buddhism has tended to withdraw from the world, and especially into monasticism, [then] perhaps now, in the phase it is going [through] in the West, Right Livelihood is a way of bringing it out into the world.

**S:** Because if in the East, as usually happened, the serious practising Buddhist was the monk. If the monk was supported by the laity, well there would be no incentive for the monk to give thought to the philosophy of Right Livelihood. He would give thought to meditation, the nature of reality, [the] nature of perception [and] cognition, etc. But he wouldn't give thought, he hasn't, he didn't give thought to the question of economics.

**Vajraketu:** Where it might be more relevant is where somebody was asking us to pay for their Alexander lessons. We might, with what you call our Order Member hat on, question... Something more contentious than Alexander lessons, if somebody wants to pay for it out of their own money...

**S:** But when putting on your non-business hat, even if they can afford it, you are still able to question whether they should really spend money on that. Even though it is their own money.

**Vajraketu:** That is what I am saying. That I would argue is a shortcoming. I don't think (words unclear) would do that. So that is an area where this would become particularly relevant.

**Ruchiraketu:** Well that's in a way what I am getting at. It's a bit like we invoke the life-style arguments etc, when we can't afford it. We don't invoke the life-style arguments when they can, as it were. So somehow the whole thing seems inconsistent.

**S:** Well it is almost a double standard.

**Vajraketu:** I don't think it is a double standard in that I think we would question the Bahamas thing. I just [think] there is a grey area.

**S:** But not Greece. (laughter) This doesn't just apply to Windhorse Trading. I'm often surprised the number of Order Members, who have no visible means of support, who seem to go off on holidays. Well one or two have a wealthy girlfriend who pays for them. But that is not always the case. So yes one should consider one's friends. And well one would expect not to just go off somewhere on a holiday knowing your good friends can't afford that.

**Kuladitya:** Does this touch on another area which we're talking about, of seeing money as one's own. It is connected to the common purse thing. So one has got the money, whether it's our twenty five pounds support, our pocket money, or whether it's some money that we've inherited. We see it as ours, and feel that we can spend it how we want to, rather than perhaps not seeing any money as ours, but seeing it as a common resource. Your question of the money philosophy, we see money as our...

**S:** But there is an argument that you need money, at least under our economy, to give expression to your individuality. And a lot of people do believe this quite strongly. Perhaps there is something in it, I don't know. But certainly if you have got money, you are in a position to fulfill your desires. Well this is something that you realise when you don't have money. I've got some reflections on this topic I think in *'The Thousand Petalled Lotus'*, haven't I? Because for several years I didn't handle money, so I wasn't in a position to fulfill any desires that I might have, and which might be fulfilled through things that one could buy. Like when I was in Benares before getting my Sramanera Ordination, just a sort of freelance wandering ascetic. My friend and I didn't even have money on a hot day to buy ourselves a drink. We were dependent on being offered a drink.

So in modern civilisation, one isn't often in that sort of situation, but I think it does need to be looked at, what the lack of money does to one's personality. Whether it is something positive or something negative or whatever. Because certainly, rightly or wrongly, a lot of people without money feel very resentful that they can't buy the things that they want. That is why they sometimes steal them. So does one as it were objectively need a certain amount of money, that you are free to spend exactly as you like? Is that a psychological necessity?

And what about the freedom to give? I don't know whether you do this at Windhorse, because at some Co-ops I know the question has been raised whether in people's support, you need to make allowance for the fact they may need to give something. Whether to a charity or just to help a friend. And if they can't do that, that is a diminution of their individuality. If they have so little money that they can't even help anybody when they want to, albeit on a small scale. I mean I came up against this in a slightly different way when I was in Kalimpong, because sometimes I used to help people, though I had very little money, but some people who were helping me rather resented this. And they wanted, well not all of them, just a few of them, that whatever they gave me I should devote entirely to myself, and not help anybody else with that. This even applied to things that I didn't really need, that I handed on to somebody else. I was supposed to use that particular thing myself. This sometimes led to quite ridiculous situations. One can't go on accumulating little oddments anyway, especially if one is a monk. Do you see what I mean? (general agreement) So one has to consider the fact that people do need to give. In a way I felt that, I liked to be able to give. Even though perhaps in strict theory one wasn't supposed to have anything left over to give. Though that is from the Theravada point of view. The Mahayana, or some Mahayana texts, explicitly make the point that it's alright for the monk to accept more than he needs for himself, so that he can give. That can be a rationalisation of course, but not necessarily so.

**Kuladitya:** If he doesn't... (words unclear)

**Keturaja:** That's quite interesting. Because it might not be, within say Windhorse, one can have a sense that one is collectively giving, and one can I think gain something from that, identify with that.

**S:** Then the question might arise well is that psychologically, or perhaps even spiritually, enough? Suppose you feel a generous impulse, just in a particular situation outside the Windhorse one. Surely it is desirable you should be able to respond to that, especially if it involves just a small sum of money.

**Vajraketu:** I think we do give ourselves enough support to do that. (**Voice:** in a small way) Or if you wanted to do it in a big way you would have to save it up over... You know you couldn't do it in a big way every week.

**S:** Sometimes the essence of the matter is that it is something spontaneous. You respond to that need. Maybe someone just stops you in the street and asks for, I was going to say half a crown, but we don't have half crowns any more do we? (laughter)

**Satyaloka:** When were you last stopped in the street? (laughter)

**S:** You know you feel when it is justified, you'd like to give but perhaps you don't have..

**Satyaloka:** We're very aware of that at the last convention (words unclear) a huge number of appeals.

**S:** Yes that reminds me; we did talk about it, some of us afterwards, and we felt that probably some limitation has to be placed in future, or at least more organised or controlled, as it were. Because, though I wasn't always there by any means, I was very conscious of people being all the time asked to dig into their pockets. Which they did, and I was surprised at what a good response there was to so many appeals, as far as I heard. But I did start to think, well this a bit too much. There are too many appeals, even though all the causes, as far as I know, were worthy ones.

But nonetheless it did seem to be becoming a bit too much. Especially when one knew that well there were very few Order Members present with any resources of their own. But people did respond I think very nobly nonetheless. But yes, I'll make a note of that because I had forgotten about it after our discussion. Because we need to bear that in mind. I don't think we can, I say we I mean the organisers, really permit each and everybody just to jump up and appeal for funds as it were on the spot, however worthy the cause.

**Ruchiraketu:** Yes I certainly experienced some discomfort with all the appeals. I felt I couldn't respond to them all.

**S:** It seemed to snowball. Well some were the regular ones, like the Golden Rainbow appeal... But others were new ones which we hadn't had before.

**Ruchiraketu:** That was an opportunity, before the whole Order.

**S:** Well I think I was present when there were about ten or twelve appeals, and there were others I am sure on evenings when I wasn't present.

**Vajraketu:** Have you explored that angle enough or do you want to ..?

**Ruchiraketu:** Which angle?

**Vajraketu:** Well put it another way, is this the time to move onto pensions? Or do you want to explore... (loud laughter)



**S:** Or move on to a cup of tea. (loud laughter) Pensions, I never expected that. Do I qualify?

**Kuladitya:** Yes. (loud laughter)

**S:** What are the pension rights of an ex-guru. (loud laughter) They talk about it very seriously in India. I think they have a pension scheme if I am not mistaken.

**Kuladitya:** Yes for full time workers.

**S:** Anyway have a cup of tea. I'm going upstairs.

**Kuladitya:** Then after that we will go onto Insight again.

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**Tea break**

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**Vajraketu:** I haven't read the second bit of Cherry's question. I wonder if she is aware that what National Insurance does, as regards pensions, is a system designed [so] the money that is paid in by people in 1993, goes to pay the pensions of old people in 1993. It isn't being put away to pay for those, who are paying now, for their pensions later. And the system is going to collapse, because the population is ageing. The system works as long as the working population stays constant. And at the moment you have got, I can't remember the proportions, let's say you have got three people working for every one person retired, and in 2010 you are going to have two people working for every one retired, and the system won't be able to cope with it.

**S:** This applies in Europe as a whole. In some countries it applies more than in Britain.

**Satyaloka:** In Sweden.

**Vajraketu:** This is a real timebomb, or an iceberg, which the Government has been trying to tackle a little bit with these things called SERPS, State Earnings Related Pensions. They are half trying to grapple with it, but because it's a problem...

**Satyaloka:** ...that somebody else is going to have to deal with.

**Vajraketu:** The solution is going to be unpopular...

**Kuladitya:** ...whatever happens.

**Vajraketu:** And there [are] no votes in it.

**S:** By that time we will probably have a Labour government, and they will just give us the money. (laughter)

**Vajraketu:** Where will they get it? They will probably confiscate it from Right Livelihood pensions funds.

**Kuladitya:** Confiscate it from rich people like the Buddhists.

**Ratnaketu:** It might be all money held by charities will be seized by the state.

**Kuladitya:** Oh Labour won't do that will they. The Conservatives might.

**Ratnaketu:** You never know.

**Kuladitya:** Labour's too soft to do that.

**Ratnaketu:** They rearmed the Polaris submarines secretly with nuclear weapons. Jim Callaghan. They're Wets.

**S:** It reminds one that economics is not an exact science.

**Kuladitya:** There is nothing safe I suppose in any of this. We could all get a pension fund going, and Robert Maxwell could intervene. (laughter)

**Ruchiraketu:** I don't think he will. (laughter)

**S:** But I think our system is Maxwell-proof actually. Because he was only a tycoon wasn't he, who bought the Mirror Group. Well you couldn't imagine a tycoon being able to buy the FWBO. Maybe our system would permit that.

**Kuladitya:** Not unless our funds were invested outside.

**S:** Only the Government could do it. Only the Government could expropriate us.

**Ratnaketu:** If we had lots of funds invested and there was bad inflation.

**S:** Yes, but that would be our fault for investing the money in that way. And not putting it say in property. I'm quite ignorant of these things; are we effected by the fact that now Britain is in the European Community? I mean with regards to insurance and pensions. Does that make any difference? Because we can work anywhere in the Community can't we. **Vajraketu:** We can.

**S:** And are pension rights transferable across national barriers, and all that?

**Vajraketu:** I don't know the answer to that one. I know that there has been a little bit of a stink because Spaniards can come here and draw unemployment benefit, or social security or something, and that has caused a little hoo-ha in right wing circles of the Government. Because they can get more unemployment benefit in London than they can in Barcelona.

**S:** Supposing for instance you opened an Evolution shop in say Germany or Spain. And workers there were paying into a pension fund. Well then if they came and worked in an Evolution shop in Britain, would their pension rights, or whatever you call it, be transferable?

**Vajraketu:** I think they are if you continue to pay into it. Didn't we have a German, temporarily, who wanted us to pay into some...

**Kuladitya:** That was back in Germany was it? (**Vajraketu:** Yes) So if they moved to England we'd carry on paying into their pension fund in Germany.

**S:** Well supposing they stayed on working in England and retired in England. Would that payment, their pension, come from Germany? You are going to need an international financial manager or adviser some day. Someone should be reading up on international commercial law.

**Satyloka:** We have enough with British law.

**Kuladitya:** We'll have a representative at Brussels won't we.

**Satyaloka:** We need some lawyers, that's what we need. They will cost us a fortune.

**Vajraketu:** The FWBO's ambassador to E.C.

(Small talk about barristers and biscuits.)

**Kuladitya:** What do you think Bhante. Do you think we needed these biscuits?

**S:** Well it depends on how you define need. Maybe you need from the point of view of keeping up morale. (laughter)

**Kuladitya:** They weren't expensive.

**S:** So you don't feel left out of the Christmas celebrations, or feel deprived?

**Kuladitya:** They weren't expensive.

**S:** Well perhaps they were even donated, who knows?

**Ratnaketu:** That's one of the things I noticed in India. Even the poorest people I encountered, both wanted to give, and did actually give things away to us, who were much richer than they were. And also they wanted to have little celebrations, even if it was a small type of biscuit thing. It's not like they just subsisted.

**Satyaloka:** Well the rich get rich by not giving money away.

**S:** Well I was telling somebody the other day when we were discussing this. Well this is the Hindu rather than the Buddhist tradition. But it is a bit general that in some of the old Hindu texts, they raised the question; what is the justification for the householder's existence? And the answer is, you set up a household, you marry and you have a family and so on and so forth, so you may be able to receive and welcome and support guests. That is the *raison d'être* of the householder's existence. When I say guests, I don't mean people you invite. The word is *atipi*, which means, well the stranger also, someone who just happens to come along.

**Kuladitya:** It's got a benefit for society.

**S:** And I think I recount in *'The Thousand Petalled Lotus'* my experience at, I think it was Mudura, where there was a old Brahmin gentleman looking around the streets searching for someone to invite in, a Sadhu preferably, to feed before they had their own meal. He didn't think his day was complete unless he had fed somebody. That was the Orthodox, or Hindu tradition. (long pause)

**Ratnaketu:** Bhante do you see that the life-style that we're establishing in terms of, we are Western Buddhist, we live an ethical but basically Western life-style, we live in houses, we have possessions... Is this a sort of compromise that is necessary, and actually what the Buddha said, [to] live in nature at the roots of trees, in a way to go back to very early form of human life-style, is that actually the ideal, and we've deviated?

**S:** Well the climate does make a difference. But even in Tibet they couldn't go and live at the roots of trees. Well they didn't have many trees in Tibet anyway. Just Juniper bushes mainly.

**Ratnaketu:** But maybe all humans should go and live in suitable climates. (laughter)

**S:** That would require a lot of organisation. (loud laughter) Well on the whole they do. Not many people live on the North and the South pole, and all that vast unoccupied tundra in Russia. They could go and live there. And look, I mean I talked about Arizona, well think of the deserts of Arizona. Go and live there.

**Ratnaketu:** I used to think (words muffled) that the modern way of life seemed to be destructive in the end. That we are using the...

**S:** Well I think the first thing you have got to do is to limit population, and population is not being limited. There is only one Western country that has achieved zero population growth. That is Italy. They have just achieved it. Despite the Pope. They achieved zero population growth. But look at China, look at India, look at Indonesia, look at Bangladesh, look at South America. It's booming the whole time. I had an interesting talk about this with Saramati, who is a very well informed sort of person. We were talking about immigration, because there is quite a bit of immigration into the States from Mexico. And I said "do you think it possible that eventually the Hispanic population will outnumber the Caucasian population?" And he said "oh no it is not possible". He said that the population can't increase, the overall population, and I asked "why?" And he said "well we don't have the water resources." There is a great problem with water in the States, even for household purposes, and especially for agriculture. There has even been discussion about importing water, towing icebergs from the North pole, and all that sort of thing. So that is a definite limiting factor to population growth in the United States. And I then raised the question of desalinisation. He said that on the scale that was required it would be too expensive, even for America. It costs hundreds of thousands of billions or something like that. So he said, this was his view, that the population of America couldn't expand very much beyond its present limits. So there was no real danger of immigration, there just wasn't water for people.

**Vajraketu:** It's a bit surprising, because apart from anything else one thinks of the Americans as being so wasteful.

**S:** Well that is another factor. Even if they were economical it seems it wouldn't make all that much difference. But they are wasteful. They use an altogether disproportionate amount of the world's resources. That is well known. But yes population is a big problem.

**Vasubandhu:** I thought China had got its population under a bit more control.

**S:** It is more controlled than India one would say, or Bangladesh or Indonesia. But it is still growing. Because they are much more strict, in an unpleasant sort of way.

**Vasubandhu:** You get taxed or something don't you if you have more than one child.

**S:** Well you can be imprisoned. So you could argue that that is the curtailment of very basic human freedom, freedom to reproduce.

**Kuladitya:** Nature will impose that curtailment of freedom eventually won't it.

**S:** It probably would yes. It would of course, well just through starvation. The number of mouths to feed would be greater than the amount of food available to feed them. Anyway getting back to pensions. I doubt I'll have anything illuminating to say at all. I don't really know anything about pension schemes.

**Vajraketu:** Well it's just a question that comes up, actually increasingly, and we've...

**S:** Not only in Co-ops, or businesses by the way. I know it has been discussed around the LBC.

**Vajraketu:** I believe they've actually started a pension scheme up. So I think we sooner or later have to address it. Even if only to say we've given it deep thought and decided that pensions are a no-no. So if you are interested in pensions, this is not the place for you. That is an option we have. But we do feel that we have to come up with something.

**S:** And relating it to your ideals and the principles of Right Livelihood presumably.

**Vajraketu:** Again the ideals and the practice we have to consider together I think. In a way an arguable ideal would be that the Movement, as it grows... Even you have mentioned... We presumably don't subscribe to the idea of retirement at a particular age. At the same time we have to recognise that as people get older, they are going to become less and less economically productive. And at a certain point they are going to cross a line where effectively they consume more than they produce.

**S:** Then again one has to consider what one means by economically productive. Because there may be a very aged Order Member connected with a particular centre or community, who may not be economically productive in terms of money, but who does attract people in a spiritual way for advice and teaching and so on and so forth.

**Vajraketu:** Perhaps I shouldn't have used the word economic...

**S:** So it might be, even in the long run, be economically productive, inasmuch as that person would attract people who would donate and so on and so forth.

**Vajraketu:** Certainly I accept that. But I am also commenting that there will be some people who will pass the line where what they contribute, in whatever way if you like, in so far as these things can be measured, what they contribute will be less than what they consume.

**S:** Well think of Dayasri for instance. She is not being supported by the FWBO, but fortunately for her there must be a state medical service in Finland which is looking after her. But supposing that wasn't there.

**Vajraketu:** So anyway it seems to me that we can either trust to the Movement, and our collective efforts. That it will be big enough, and strong enough, and compassionate enough even, to look after (S: and able) to look after the people who devoted their lives to it, and become in need of support. We could trust to that completely and start planning for it in a general way. Or we could tailor something more individual. The argument for the individual could be either that we don't think the Movement will have the resources to support everybody. So if some people are in a position to...

**S:** Well that would also depend on whether the Movement is expanding. Because a live Movement will presumably expand, so if one doesn't believe that it will be able to support everybody, it means also that one doesn't have faith in it's going to be expanding.

**Vajraketu:** Yes. I think it will be possible to argue that while you had faith in its continuing to expand, you didn't have complete faith it would expand in such a way that it would be strong enough to support the elderly in twenty years time. You pointed out yourself this morning that in forty three centres in twenty years, not a large number of those forty three centres is generating much excess resources. It does require a certain amount of faith to believe that the situation will change dramatically in twenty years. To a certain extent I am also arguing here from the point of view of... I think I don't personally worry about this.

**S:** Well I suppose spiritually speaking people continue being productive long after say they have reached the age of sixty five. And people of sixty five, seventy well people like say, looking outside the FWBO, people like Philip Kapleau, who is over eighty now, is still contributing very substantially to his

Movement. There will be some at least who will be functioning in that way.

**Vajraketu:** Again, as I say, I think that will be true for quite a lot of us. But there might also be people who can't contribute much. Either because of physical disability...

**S:** Well perhaps they never have done.

**Vajraketu:** There is a band of people who are very sincere and hard working...

**S:** ...and not very talented.

**Vajraketu:** And not very talented. An illustration that comes to my mind, I'm not sure of my facts here, but I think Ratnasuri has a state pension. And I am sure now Taraloka would be quite happy to sponsor... But this is not necessary. She has been able to go there, and I believe she contributes a lot as an Order Member.

**S:** She does; well, she's a preceptor.

**Vajraketu:** But she is also doesn't require any support from the community. And I suspect that nowadays that wouldn't, in her particular case, be an issue. But you can imagine other cases where somebody, if they could come to Padmaloka, and say "look, how about if I do a bit of sweeping up and so forth. And I've got forty pounds a week coming to me from the time I worked in such and such a Co-op". It would be easier for them.

**S:** Well in India several Order Members in that respect, elderly ones, who have retired early from government service and taken a reduced pension and work for the Movement. Because their pension well the (words unclear). Ratnasuri's is a state pension.

**Ratnaketu:** Surely if there is no medical assistance needed, it is simply a matter of food and very little clothing. Not much food at that. I imagine that there will always be, as places expand, there will be a room here and a room there where people can go and stay.

**Vajraketu:** Well there is rent as well. If you take rent into account you are probably looking, at today's prices, at sixty or seventy pounds a week.

**S:** Well again the bigger the community the more easily you can accommodate an extra person or two. I thought about this a bit in my early days. Because, I don't know if you remember, in *'The Thousand Petalled Lotus'*, when I was in Calcutta, before I went forth on my wanderings. I stayed in the Maha Bodhi orphanage. And there was that old German lady there, Christina Albers. And you remember the sort of state that she was in. I mean virtually destitute after well working in India all her adult life, practically. At that time I said to myself, quite sort of consciously, that well you could easily end up like that. And I was quite prepared for that. Because I didn't know what my future was going to be. So I incline personally, always have inclined, maybe temperamentally, to the idealistic solution. Not to bother you know, and if for instance the Order couldn't support me in my old age, it probably wouldn't have been worthwhile starting the Order anyway. But I believe, maybe this is circular reasoning, it has been worthwhile starting it. So I don't have anything to worry about. You might say that my position is a bit exceptional. But again I have enough faith in the Order to believe that well if it continues being an Order, well it's not going to neglect its own people in their old age. On the other hand I do understand people worrying about this. So I find it difficult to decide. Because my own inclination is definitely to take the idealistic view, and encourage others to. But if they aren't able to, well I don't feel that we can really force them to take that view. I hope that they could take that view, but I don't blame them if they can't.

**Vajraketu:** We can't force them to take that view. But we can take the position that we don't do anything

about it.

**S:** Yes exactly.

**Vajraketu:** If you want to work for us... To change the tack perhaps slightly, insofar as at the moment at least, as you pointed out yesterday, Windhorse is perhaps the main source of central funds for the Movement, if people are not going to be sorting out their pensions individually then, notwithstanding there will be places in some communities for some old people etc, perhaps we are going to have to clean up around the edges.

**S:** On the other hand you don't want to be having to support, or give pensions, to so many ex-Windhorse workers that you can't contribute anywhere else.

**Vajraketu:** I wasn't thinking of just ex-Windhorse workers. I was thinking of Order Members who have given years and years to a little centre, and for one reason or another, that centre has not generated enough to support them, through no fault of their own perhaps. As you said perhaps talent or circumstance. The question to a certain extent arises, how much should we start planning for that?

**S:** It might be a better idea, I'm only saying this off the top of my head, is to set up a sort of central fund from which sort of discretionary grants would be given. Rather than making it a general sort of thing. But I certainly hope that the majority of Order Members will be healthy and live long, and continue to work for the Dharma right up until the last. That would seem to me to be the ideal. When I say work for the Dharma I include meditation and all that. Not that you are necessarily travelling around giving lectures and leading retreats.

**Vajraketu:** So you personally incline, not as a definitive pronouncement perhaps, but it sounds to me that you are personally inclined more to faith that everything will be alright.

**S:** The idealistic non-solution.

**Vajraketu:** You don't regard it as especially attractive, what I call the Ratnasuri example. Where if most of us, or some of us, got ourselves in a position where we could offer any community or centre or whatever a certain amount of support in our old age, so that while we would have something to contribute, we would not be a financial drain.

**S:** And then if we had a central fund it could be managed in that way.

**Satyaloka:** So that would be, you say, relying on the Movement. That would be addressing the issue now. The concern for some people is not addressing it, and saying the Movement will provide. Well how will the Movement provide? You could say put something in place now, so there will be central funds which will be able to provide. Or we don't do that, we look to the future and hope that things will be alright.

**S:** Perhaps I shouldn't say this, because I am not in that sort of position, but I think some people worry a bit unnecessarily, or perhaps a bit prematurely, I mean when they are still very young. But that is the way things are these days in the world. As soon as you start working you start thinking in these sort of terms don't you, negotiating your pension rights and so on and so forth. Well perhaps we ought to set an example of unworldliness. Well I suppose I can only speak for myself, and as I said I am not quite in the same position as others. I'm just not going to think about it. It's not even a question of hoping for the best, I don't even think about it to that extent, personally. And I certainly hope that I can at least go on writing right up to the end. There is so much that I want to write.

**Kuladitya:** It's as if our solution ought to be Kalyana Mitrata.

**S:** Well yes there is one's friends. What about one's friends? Especially one's younger ones, one's disciples. Because perhaps some of you, at that time, will be preceptors. Surely people are going to look after their preceptors. But of course there is the case of, as you say, of someone who isn't very talented, (who) has been quite faithful and done his or her bit, but perhaps hasn't attracted much in the way of attention, and doesn't have any particular disciples, (who) led quite a worthy unobtrusive sort of Order life. Well perhaps there needs to be some arrangement for helping such a person. That could be met by setting up a centralised fund, but then no doubt you would have to establish criteria. And perhaps all sorts of people would consider that they had a claim on that. So I don't see any overall solution really. Although I do prefer personally to rest my faith on the ideal, and just hope that other people could do that.

**Vajraketu:** So if we were to pursue the idea of some sort of individually tailored pension you would be a bit disappointed?

**S:** I think I would yes, I think I would. Though at the same time I would not blame anybody. But yes I would be disappointed.

**Vajraketu:** I do feel that I am arguing the case for people who aren't here, rather than for people who are. Because I think that most of us would feel that we can trust to the Movement, and to a certain extent perhaps justifiably in a way. You imagine that the Movement is going to look after...

**S:** Looking at it from another point of view. I'd much rather support someone here and now say to do editing work, than to put aside money to support someone in twenty years time.

**Vajraketu:** That is something that we have considered. To come in a slight tangent, one thing we did feel when we have discussed this is that we couldn't take money out of the Movement for something in twenty years. But what we are doing as you know, is buying houses which we live in. And what's going to happen in about fifteen years time, when we own them outright, is that the rents that we could charge for living in them, which is currently going out in a mortgage, will become available to the Movement. One possibility was that that could be part of...

**S:** Well that is an asset which you will have, and which you can use as seems best at the time, in whatsoever way.

**Kuladitya:** Perhaps we shouldn't think of earmarking funds for pensions then.

**S:** That will be just one of the options which you have. But it is a bit like what I spoke of in terms of setting up a central fund. You've got the fund at present in terms of property, so that leaves it sufficiently fluid. You are not undertaking to support anyone in the future. But if you decide well someone needs to be supported, well you will be in a position to do that, or to divert that income otherwise.

**Ratnaketu:** Presumably it will all come down to patience with the facts of life. You know we are talking about people in England - what about the thousands of people in India? They've got no... It's completely out of the question.

**S:** Yes no safety net at all.

**Ratnaketu:** They just have to accept that they'll get what they get. Which might not be much.

**S:** Might not be anything. Suppose you don't have any children, or the children die, or they become alienated. You could be left in your old age in a state of complete beggary. This can happen quite easily in India.



**Kuladitya:** Then in society one hasn't got a right to expect support in your old age I suppose.

**S:** Well I don't think in terms of rights at all in any context as you know. I think in, I try to think in, terms of duties. So you might say that I mean young active economically productive Order Members have got a duty to think of those who are not in that position. I'd probably prefer to leave it there, rather than say that those who have worked all their lives for the Movement have got a right to be supported. I don't like that sort of language or terminology or attitude at all. I spoke a little about this in 'FWBO and Protestant Buddhism' haven't I. Thinking in terms of duties rather than rights. Well you know a right is something, to my mind, has a purely legal significance, something which is legally enforceable.

**Kuladitya:** Sounds as if the Case of Dysentery should be our model.

**Satyaloka:** You seem to be saying well that's what you can hope for, and you'll be disappointed. But we do have people coming to us who have contributed towards the state pension. They are saying well if you were to give me money to pay my national insurance, it would go towards that. That's how I would like to sort out my future. You can't demand that somebody has faith.

**S:** Right no, no not at all. Faith by its very nature cannot be demanded.

**Kuladitya:** Especially if they are not an Order Member. I mean it seems to be a bit different with Order Members.

**Satyaloka:** Is that where you draw the distinction, between Order Members and...

**S:** Well certainly. But when you wanted to as it were employ a non-Order Member on that sort of basis, that is quite another question. You would have to decide that separately. (pause) Well to change the subject slightly, does one get a state pension at eighty regardless of contributions? I did hear something to that effect some time ago. No? Or is it under some other heading?

**Satyaloka:** It's a lesser pension you get if your contributions aren't of a sufficient amount, as I understand. If you are not entitled to a state pension, you get a lesser amount. The equivalent of supplementary benefit but not the state pension.

**S:** When I go to the Bethnal Green Post Office, especially on Mondays and Tuesdays, people seem to be drawing out enormous sums, it would seem to me. I don't know on quite what grounds. They do seem to draw very large sums of money. Old people, younger people. Maybe half of them are old and half are young. Most of the young ones are women, presumably they have children. (words unclear) I think of all that money flying out every week from one Post Office in London. Well we know how many billions flow out. Seventy billions or something like that every year. It's the biggest item on the national expenditure isn't it.

**Satyaloka:** Bhante I wonder if we could return to the subject of therapy. When I mentioned therapy, I had in mind psychotherapy as well. I'm not sure that you were aware of that.

**S:** No. I did think you meant physical therapy. But I think psychotherapy becomes even more problematic, because it is even more uncertain. It can go on for years and years. So if someone working for you needed psychotherapy, well perhaps he wasn't in a position to work for you. I mean the situation being really quite demanding.

**Satyaloka:** Well people seem to turn to it when they are not in such an extreme position that they are not capable of working. It doesn't seem to be employed in that extreme case. They are quite capable of working. But also want, also feel they need, to explore avenues of things that have happened to them, their personality, through psychotherapy. It's not that they are of a sufficient level of...

**S:** I tend to think of that level of psychotherapy as a luxury. Because there is no end to it. You can go on exploring and exploring. Recently there has been some work done, I gather, in this field of false memory. Especially in connection with childhood abuse. And it does seem that quite a lot of people have false memories of such things.

Well what is the significance of exploration when actually it's false memories that are involved rather than genuine ones? So I think it is a very tricky area. I know sometimes people are helped a bit, within limits, by psychotherapy and counselling. But I tend to think even within the Movement, it does get sometimes a bit out of hand.

**Satyaloka:** It seems a bit related to the sort of culture in one way. In Cambridge there isn't a culture of that, people don't do it very much. In other places it's almost in the air and people do tend to go to it a lot.

**Ruchiraketu:** Well I think again it is related a lot to vision. If you are having a hard time what do you do? Go to your spiritual friends or go to a therapist?

**S:** Formerly you might have gone to the priest. Formerly you confessed your wicked thoughts. Now you explore them. (laughter)

**Satyaloka:** Presumably people are feeling those needs aren't being met in other ways. They feel the need to explore...

**S:** Well what is that need to explore? You know I think that needs to be looked at.

**Kuladitya:** Do you have any indications on what you think it is?

**S:** I really don't know. It is so varied. It can mean so many different things. Maybe I just belong to a different generation, (I) wasn't brought up in that sort of way. To me it just seems very self indulgent. Maybe I shouldn't say that, because I don't think I have ever had great problems of that sort. Well some people do have quite serious problems, and not all problems are imaginary. Some people do need help of some kind.

**Satyaloka:** You wrote, well you didn't write, you spoke about it. There is a bit in 'Wisdom Beyond Words' about it. A little section where you address the issue. You said well maybe you do need to address things through psychotherapy, but as soon as possible you should get on to considering more positive things, considering the ideal. The danger is you (get into) a circularity.

**S:** I know quite a few people have had counselling with Atula. And I've spoken to several about that. Or they have written to me. It does seem to have helped them. But it does seem that Atula does get them off that, as soon as he can. He doesn't encourage them to stay with him indefinitely. Which may well be the situation outside the FWBO.

**Kuladitya:** Especially if it is one's means of support.

**S:** Yes indeed. I'm sure there is a lot one could just talk about with one's spiritual friends.

**Kuladitya:** We don't necessarily want to set up a situation where someone can take a course of least resistance, ie ask Windhorse for the money to pay for the psychotherapy rather than try to work it out with spiritual friends. Look up to the ideal rather than...

**S:** If someone wants to join you with that sort of requirement, perhaps you should say "we'd be happy to have you when you've sorted all that out". To say that this situation is quite demanding, and it's going to

take all you've got, so please sort that out first, then we can consider taking you on. I doubt you have had the situation where one of your existing workers has wanted money for that purpose.

**Kuladitya:** Not to start with. They'd have been doing it when they come up.

**Satyaloka:** Mmm, it has happened. But not in Cambridge, but out in the shops. To do with the area we've talked about of memories sort of emerging.

**S:** Well alleged memories at least. But I think there is a general trend in our cultural society at present to dwell on the past too much I think. It's almost become fashionable. I've seen it over the last few years. I've seen a number of people that write to me about, well some Order Members some Mitras some Friends, about recollections or alleged recollections, of childhood abuse. Saying "I think I must have been abused". Very often it takes that form. I don't know whether it is always healthy or positive to overconcern oneself with that.

**Satyaloka:** But it does seem to have... There are people I know, it does seem to have quite definite effects on them. Certain areas of their personality do seem to exert a definite influence.

**S:** I don't think that is always the diagnosis as it were. Because people often reason backwards. That this is the sort of state that I am in, it must have been produced by some such experience. Which may not always be the case. If there is a definite memory of a definite experience, especially corroborated by third parties, well one may conclude in that way. Well it isn't always the case by any means. And as I have said we know there is a whole field of study within the psychology of false memories, especially in this particular connection.

**Satyaloka:** It's a very emotive area, particularly that question. I don't know how you would go about that. Because part of what seems to go with abuse is the taboo of silence. Not talking about it. And it goes on and you don't talk about it. So that seems a big issue for when people talk about it...

**S:** Then that argument can be misused.

**Satyaloka:** So it is almost if you were to challenge that, or enquire whether this really did happen, you're challenging something that is very, very emotional for some people. Very charged.

**Ratnaketu:** Isn't it I think a lot of what's needed is a certain amount of time and awareness. If you say well okay something did happen, it seems like it happened. Then just by being aware of that, doing the mindfulness of breathing, the metta bhavana, getting on with your life, and sure feeling the pain when there is pain or whatever it is, but not indulging it, is actually...

**S:** Nowadays, it does seem to have grown over the last few years, is this victim mentality. To cast oneself in the role of victim, and blame others. Well sometimes one is a victim. One is not just victim ever. And therefore demanding compensation for what one has suffered, sometimes even monetary compensation. This seems to have developed greatly over the last few years.

**Ratnaketu:** I have heard that some interesting things have been coming out recently. Some women who had been sexually abused when they were young, have said that the abuse wasn't nearly as bad as the subsequent medical examination and public inquiry, which was actually far more damaging to them, far more painful, than the abuse which they said was just something that was happening. It wasn't particularly a big deal.

**S:** It was only a big deal in law, rather than in psychology, at least in those cases.

**Ratnaketu:** And in public view.

**S:** But any way we are trying to sort out this question of whether the business should pay for therapy. More clearly one should have reservations, as one can't give an absolute negative. But one would need to look at the whole issue in the case of a particular person very closely indeed. One might have to challenge their 'needs' in single inverted commas for that, when wearing one's other hat of course. I've noticed from people who have talked to me and written to me in the Movement, some people seem to derive a lot of comfort and reassurance from the fact that they are in therapy of some kind or other, and well I wonder if that is entirely positive. That that feeling of comfort and reassurance, and attention...

**Kuladitya:** Doesn't it make it questionable to what are they going for refuge?

**S:** What about the part of spiritual friendship. Have they not got spiritual friends that they can talk to. Well maybe when there is definite psychological damage, perhaps you do need to talk to a professionally trained person. I'm quite sure there are some such cases, but perhaps they are fewer than people sometimes think.

**Kuladitya:** People feel more reassured talking to a professional than talking to a friend somehow. Professionals have got a very high status haven't they.

**S:** That's true. Although it does seem that sometimes, that a professional with experience can help you to get at the problem more quickly, than the untrained person.

**Ruchiraketu:** Having met some of these professionals on courses I've been on, it's quite marked sometimes that the professional therapists are the most weird and disturbed people on the courses, compared with business people and so on. I'm thinking here of NLP courses. Quite a few therapists go on..

**S:** Well it raises the question of why someone takes up therapy as a profession?

**Ruchiraketu:** I mean I do agree that some problems are better dealt with by professionals. But I think that we need to be really quite careful who we consider to be qualified in that way. It really is quite marked that the people who are most odd, and maybe psychologically strange on the courses, tend to be therapists.

**S:** Well I have recently received reports about that [Dharma] teachers' conference that they had, a big one, in America. I forget the numbers. Maybe about two hundred teachers. And the things that went on there... I was asked for my comment, and I said that it seemed to me that they should all stop teaching for at least five years. They seemed just not fit to teach anybody anything. To be so disturbed... (people speaking at once) Well Buddhism, meditation, everything. This is Dharma teachers.

**Kuladitya:** Is this the one that Paramabodhi went to?

**S:** That's right, yes. I received a fuller report including some of the details. I thought it was really quite horrific. I mean the vast majority (word unclear) should stop teaching for at least five years, I say. Sort themselves out. But Americans often don't see. They think it is all real, it's genuine, you're in touch with what you are feeling. That's the sort of teaching or teacher that you need, and so forth.

**Ruchiraketu:** Again I think this is one of the sort of cultures that can arise. Again I don't think we have it in Cambridge. By and large if someone is having a hard time or whatever, (they're) directed out of it in a slightly different way. Well a hard time is just a hard time. Life is like that. (laughter)

**S:** Everybody has a hard time from time to time. I mean no one escapes completely.

**Ruchiraketu:** Whereas in another culture I think it can become a problem.

**S:** Well in some cultures you are sent to the witch-doctor, or you go to the witch-doctor, and sometimes they are more effective.

**Ruchiraketu:** I'm thinking here of cultures in the FWBO, within the Movement even.

**Vajraketu:** The issue behind this issue of therapy really is what we were talking about yesterday. Yesterday we were talking about quantity versus quality. It is this sense I think some of us have, that we have a culture which we call Right Livelihood, which has many details and nuances etc, which we are working on all the time, and which we would like to export both to our own... Yesterday we were referring to, in inverted commas, as peripheral, to the shops. But that is where some of our problems arise, is that issues that we can sort out quite naturally in our own (patch), perhaps because the channels of Kalyana Mitrata flow relatively freely, it's more difficult with perhaps people who only see one of us once a month, for three hours, in a meeting or something like that.

**S:** But the inadequacy there is the inadequacy of the local centre, and its various dependencies. Its communities and so on.

**Vajraketu:** Yes. But nevertheless so far, as we are interacting with them, we would like to put in our three pennies worth.

**Kuladitya:** Well we have to in a way, don't we. We can't necessarily change the centre, but we have got people working with us who we want to have an effect on, I suppose, to try and make the Evolution shop at least more ideal.

**S:** Are you saying that in the case of people working as it were at the periphery, when it comes to the question of paying for their psychotherapy, you have to be a bit more as it were lenient.

**Vajraketu:** I don't know about being more lenient. Well on that particular issue I think we need to have a position. On the whole, that particular one we are not very keen on.

**S:** Well perhaps it's a question of thus far shall one go and no further.

**Vajraketu:** One example is when we first take people on. Inevitably we first take people on at a relatively low level of commitment. Either because they can't possibly know what it is they are committing themselves to is one factor. Sometimes they are relatively new to the Movement. Or even they have been in it a long time, but they are perhaps attached to a centre which has got a particular view or something. We have different experiences. We can take people quite new with all sort of funny ideas, and they can lose those ideas immersed in the culture quite quickly. And it can be a reasonably positive experience, a good thing to have done.

So one doesn't want to say we'll only take on Mitras who have asked for Ordination and have been going to Padmaloka for two years. Because we've taken people from Manchester who have just been to half a dozen beginners' classes, and they've taken to it all like a duck to water. We have other experience where people we've come up against, whether it's therapy or some other need, difficulty... And there has been quite a lot of this (slapping fist into palm) and through it transformation and a positive outcome. And other times we don't seem to get anywhere. It's judging, it's quite difficult to know before the event.

**S:** So where does the question of therapy come in? If it does come in.

**Vajraketu:** It comes in for example when you... I don't know if I am specifically thinking of...

**S:** Well perhaps if you can't get anywhere with them, and perhaps they say...

**Vajraketu:** I think where it comes in is if somebody who we've taken on, not knowing if they are going to take to it like a duck to water, get there in the end, or not work out, if they want to do some therapy. If that arose in Cambridge we might have enough Kalyana Mitrata sloshing around to deal with them in a way that is helpful to them.

**S:** But it seems to me quite simple. Well if they are peripheral you have to decide. Well there are only two alternatives. Either you say "no we can't pay for your therapy so you will have to leave", or you say well "yes okay we'll pay for your therapy", in which case you will have to fix presumably a limit.

**Vajraketu:** I think what I am saying is that ideally we would provide something more than, yes or no you can have therapy. We would enter into a dialogue with them.

**S:** Well if you had the people to do that. Well if you have, they are not exactly peripheral in the sense that we have been discussing.

**Kuladitya:** Yes because that constitutes at least some degree of Kalyana Mitrata.

**S:** But if there is an extreme case where you are not in a position to give that sort of Kalyana Mitrata, you have to decide. Either you keep them and pay for their therapy, or you are not able to pay for their therapy, or think you shouldn't, and you terminate their services. That is the extreme case.

**Vasubandhu:** It also intersects with this growth-cum-quality thing. Because obviously the quicker we grow, the more difficult it is if you like to slosh the Kalyana Mitrata around. And the more we rely on it sloshing around in other centres if you like. And if we are growing in numbers quicker, that becomes more difficult to get across. So you have to balance those two as well. The depth is another way of looking at the quality. The depth of communication that is going on, and stuff like that.

**Ruchiraketu:** This is the way that the two issues are related. Because we started off talking about therapy. But now we have moved into a slightly different topic. Well actually we had the experience in Cambridge of people coming to the situation feeling fairly sure that they need therapy, but then through contact with the situation the whole idea of therapy becomes redundant. They just forget all about it. And that's the relationship I think. This depth of contact, and the whole question of therapy and other approaches apart from therapy, as a way of particularly dealing with more mental or emotional problems.

When we are talking about things like backs going out or something like that, that seems to be a different class of issue, but if we are talking about the as it were mental or psychological problems, there are perhaps other avenues. Well I think one way to open up the other avenues is to be able to take a firmer stand, or a more frugal attitude, or whatever, when it comes to supporting people attending therapists. I think there is another avenue which is encouraging Kalyana Mitrata, so not only are we saying "No, we don't encourage therapy", but also we do encourage Kalyana Mitrata. Maybe that's where it comes back to this quality/quantity question.

**S:** But the question of whether you give support for therapy only really arises when you are not in a position to offer the spiritual friendship. And that situation may sometimes arise, on the periphery.

**Vajraketu:** Well I wasn't meaning to concentrate on the therapy. That's just a particular manifestation of the difficulties that arise because we are unable to transfer our culture easily. We can transfer some of it, which is where we come back to quality versus quantity. Is some of it better than nothing? Obviously in some situations, some of it is better than nothing, and then it comes down to making individual judgements. But I wasn't thinking (word unclear) of the therapy so much as that just being one manifestation of the sort of thing that arises when...

**S:** Well you might even say in society as a whole. Many of people's emotional and mental [difficulties] are due to the fact that there is not enough, in our terms, Kalyana Mitrata in the broader sense. Not enough empathy.

**Ruchiraketu:** I wonder if we could move onto that topic then a bit more Bhante. We've probably looked quite a bit now at that 'give what you can, take what you need' area. Another topic I have down here is mortgages. But I think from what you have said already...

**S:** I don't know anything about mortgages I'm glad to say.

**Satyaloka:** It's a question for us to make judgements about (words unclear).

**Vajraketu:** That, just in case you are worried, is taking on people who have already got mortgages.

**S:** Yes this I realised. At least I do know that a mortgage is something that involves paying out. (laughter)

**Vajraketu:** I meant rather than, if someone who already worked for us, paying for their mortgage.

**S:** Well sometimes people come with existing commitments.

**Ruchiraketu:** Okay, so this is in a way going back to what we were talking about yesterday, in talking about the development of insight. There is a question here about the value of collective practice as a way, as supporting, as creating conditions for the arising of the Bodhicitta. So we're really going now from one extreme to the other.

**S:** Maybe one should first of all be a little mindful of the sense in which one is using the term collective. In tradition, one speaks in this context of the arising of the Bodhicitta, but you mustn't forget in our way of thinking, the Bodhicitta is the altruistic dimension of the Going For Refuge itself. So maybe one needs to discuss the question in terms of Going For Refuge first. Well yes, let's say common practice, rather than collective practice. Common practice does increase the intensity of the Going For Refuge of all concerned. I think a common meditation does increase the intensity of everybody's experience. Most people need that. Because if you aren't getting on very well with your own meditation, you are meditating say with others who are getting on well with theirs, it does give you a sort of lift. You definitely feel something, some change of atmosphere, which you can pick up on, and which helps you with your own meditation. So I think there is a value as it were in the so called collective practice. Some practices are perhaps essentially collective, like for instance puja. Or collective rather than individual let's say. So yes, I think collective practice, to use that term, does have a value of its own.

**Kuladitya:** Intensification generally.

**Ruchiraketu:** Because quite a few individuals... They argue the opposite, that their meditation is better when they meditate by themselves. We tend to, at least again in Cambridge here, we tend to encourage common practice.

**S:** Yes I do know some people do say that their meditation is better when they are on their own. I think maybe that needs looking into a little more. What (do) they mean by that? Because it depends on the actual situation. Supposing you're meditating with half a dozen other people. There is a lot of fidgeting and coughing and clearing of throats. Well yes when you are on your own your meditation may well be better. But it will be, not because meditating on your own was intrinsically better, but because of some of the circumstances of meditating together. And I think in some cases perhaps people who say that they meditate better on their own, are people of rather a sort of irritable temperament. And are easily annoyed by others, in the proximity of others, even the physical proximity. Maybe just the situation is rather

crowded. I think actually, including when you meditate, you need a certain space around you. I think I have talked about this in the past. It's as though you have a sort of aura that mustn't be impinged upon. Well animals certainly have this. Animals feel uneasy when their aura is impinged upon. So if you have an animal in a cage, the cage should be a little bigger than the aura. Otherwise it affects the animal quite badly.

**Kuladitya:** There is the getting up in the morning as opposed to meditating in the evening. That seems to be a common one. That people prefer to meditate in the evening by themselves rather than collectively in the morning.

**S:** Yes it's not to do with collective versus individual practise per se, but it's the time of day.

**Kuladitya:** But then again we are in a position... How do we trade off the benefits of someone...

**S:** But if someone just can't meditate in the morning, well they are probably not contributing much to the collective meditation, if they are just sitting there half asleep all the time. Maybe it is better that they can meditate by themselves in the evening. Well that possibility has to be accepted. But again on the other hand, if you leave the meditation to the evening, you are more likely I think not to meditate at all. One has to weigh against that danger. I've seen in so many cases somebody said well I don't feel like meditating this time, I'll meditate in the evening. Well very likely they don't. It does seem that there are morning persons and evening persons. Well being a morning person myself I'm not very sympathetic to the evening person. (laughter) But I make allowance for that.

**Satyaloka:** Given that we are talking specifically about Cambridge, that we are running the business in a certain way, with a particular structure. The communities are structured in a particular way, which is that we have, well two of them anyway, a collective practice in the morning, there is a morning meditation. We expect people as part of their duty as a community member to attend that. That's been the way that we have done things, because we have tended to find that those common practices, like meditating together, eating together etc, strengthen the community. We tend to argue that even (if) somebody was not going to get that much out of it, be a bit sleepy in the morning, but for the collective good, for the community, the spirit of the community, it's important for everybody to be there.

**S:** I think that is true. And also one must say that one needs to create the conditions. Because if you regard yourself as a night person, and you have got to get up early, it's no use going to bed at one or two o'clock in the morning. You have got to exercise discipline at the end of the day. I remember in this connection something I have intended to talk about, because I did find it interesting. I haven't talked about it yet. In an Islamic work, a work of Islamic jurisprudence, I found the axiom that you have a duty to create the conditions for the performance of a duty. You have the duty to create the conditions for the performance of a duty. So if you have a duty to get up and meditate in the morning, you have a duty to create the conditions that will enable you to do that, ie by going to bed early and not staying up late. I thought that quite a useful little axiom which we can apply in all sorts of ways.

**Satyaloka:** So collective practice can bring about an intensification. You wanted to explore it in terms of Going For Refuge, looking at Bodhicitta in terms of the altruistic dimension of Going For Refuge. Is there something specific about that collective practice that is more likely to intensify Going For Refuge and therefore, speaking of Bodhicitta in that way, be more beneficial than individual practice?

**S:** Yes. Insight is more likely to arise in dependence on any more intense experience, whether collective or individual. If you are more likely to have the intense experience in the collective situation, then one could argue that the insight is more likely to arise in dependence on the collective situation. Only more likely. You can't really express it so to speak statistically. Don't forget the Buddha himself gained Enlightenment all on his own.



**Satyaloka:** I wonder if he got up in the morning?

**S:** He didn't, because he had been sitting up all night. (loud laughter)

**Kuladitya:** Shantideva yes.

**Ratnaketu:** I wondered on that line whether with regard to meditation, one has to balance the aim of getting into a good state, with the aim of working in the meditation. One person can say if they meditate in the evening they get into a good state. But then maybe if they meditate in the morning they have the experience of working, of making that effort. And that has its own validity.

**S:** Well it does. But the effort is to get to the state presumably.

**Kuladitya:** I.e. defining good state as access concentration and above.

**Ruchiraketu:** I wonder if you are thinking of one of the aphorisms in Peace is a Fire, that the purpose of meditation is not to have good meditations, but to transform ourselves. Is that what you were thinking of?

**Ratnaketu:** Yes.

**S:** Or maybe you are thinking of Kamalasila's aphorism, at least as it was quoted to me, that a good meditation was one in which you continue to make an effort. Because that means also that when you are having a good meditation, you continue to make an effort to make it even better, you don't just settle down in a good meditation.

**Ratnaketu:** If you have been having a good meditation, making a continuous effort, then [as] you go through the rest of the day, [when] you encounter obstacles, you are more likely to overcome them. Whereas if you've just been enjoying a pleasant state, you later encounter obstacles...

**S:** Perhaps it is different with different people.

**Vajraketu:** I think the area of interest for us is not so much in terms of the benefit, or otherwise, on the individual meditation. It's as though we run, what I at least call, a tight ship, and we would argue that we do that because we have found that it works.

**S:** Yes I think it probably does.

**Vajraketu:** I think what we are fishing for (much laughter) is a 'Transcendental Critique Of The Tight Ship'. (much laughter)

**Kuladitya:** A series of lectures if ever I heard one. (laughter)

**Vajraketu:** Yes we've found that it works...

**Kuladitya:** ...but we don't know why...

**Vajraketu:** ...but I think what we are looking for (is) whether that has any, other than a mundane, justification.

**S:** Well at least it provides a more adequate basis for the arising of the Transcendental, and therefore that Transcendental is more likely to arise.

**Kuladitya:** How does it provide that basis?

**S:** Well mainly by virtue of it's increased intensity. An intensity which perhaps you could not generate individually. Not that it is impossible, but you are more likely to generate it so to speak together. The term collective isn't quite appropriate.

**Ruchiraketu:** I wonder if we are back here Bhante to this dimension of objectivity as opposed to subjectivity.

**S:** It has some bearing obviously.

**Ruchiraketu:** That even to be involved in a collective practice, or whatever, does involve some degree of self-overcoming, and that probably helps to create the conditions... One is arriving there with an attitude that one isn't just doing this for oneself, but for... In quite a practical sense one is not... It is not just that we do the dedication of merits at the end, but one is doing it... Not just doing it, quite literally, for oneself, but for the community.

**S:** It's not enough... I mean there are some Tibetans who do just repeat those words of the Transference of Merits and so on, or the Bodhisattva vow. One's got to actually be engaged in an object oriented sort of way.

**Kuladitya:** So in a sense you are saying even being at the meditation is part of that Transference of Merit, because you are contributing to the intensity for everybody.

**S:** By your mere presence even. This brings me to another little... It's a bit by the way. But not unconnected. Someone mentioned, it might have even been in a reporting-in, on the convention, people came out of the puja in the evening to find some people playing cards and pool. Well they didn't feel very happy about it. Not that they were feeling moralistic, but the fact that the energy that those people could have put into the Puja with them just had not been put. So we were talking about that at Padmaloka recently. So maybe it is something that we will have to give attention to, because you cannot subscript people. But it is discouraging in a way, if there was you engaged in the collective practice, and [you] become aware of others who have not thought it worthwhile to join you. And also I have talked about this in another sort of connection sometime ago, that especially say on National Order Weekends, I don't think it a good thing for Chairmen and others to try to have impromptu meetings and things, missing out on the collective meditation, puja and so forth. So I tend to discourage spending time with friends, which is good in itself, while missing out on the collective practice.

**Kuladitya:** That's quite an interesting point isn't it. Because the meeting is presumably a good thing, and the spending time with friends is a good thing, so it is not like one can accuse them of going down the pub and getting drunk, but what you seem to be saying is [that] to take part in the collective practice is an even better thing, in a hierarchy.

**S:** On that occasion. The occasion by definition is for that. We are exemplifying the Buddha's exhortation to gather in large numbers. But that means together, to do things together, because we don't normally have the opportunity to do things together to that extent. So I mentioned this recently to some of the presidents and preceptors, and said that maybe they should try to set, so to speak, an example in this respect.

**Ruchiraketu:** I think particularly people in that sort of position do create quite a momentum as it were, either towards or away from activities like that.

**Lalitavajra:** Could you see common practice as a movement say of turning life into ritual? Would that be... I was wondering with regards.. We were talking about yesterday work as sadhana. Whether if you have a regular life-style [if] you are going through more or less the same patterns each day, whether you

are in fact, in a certain sort of way, setting up a ritual.

**S:** That's true. I personally find this nowadays with my daily program or routine. I like to do exactly the same every day. But then I am quite old, and I have done a lot of things. That doesn't suit everybody, especially it doesn't suit young people, but I personally like this. And yes it does feel like a ritual that you do the same... I quite enjoy doing the same thing every day, getting up at the same time, giving Paramartha a call, having a cup of tea, meditating, then breakfast. He goes off to college, I sit down at my desk. I'm there working until one o'clock, lunch. I quite like that, but some people consider this very boring and mechanical. Well I don't in the least, I like this sort of regular routine, and I find I can be very productive.

I don't mind the occasional sort of break in it. But not too much or too often. But some people just couldn't stand this, especially as I have said younger people, who feel that they need more variety, or at least feel that they need... But yes, if you are living in this way, yes your life does become a sort of ritual, you can be more mindful also. As I say I quite enjoy this. I don't expect everybody to, and also it depends on circumstances, whether you are able to live in that sort of way. It isn't always possible. I try to keep up elements of that ritual even when I am travelling. Like when I was in the States, I had the mornings to myself virtually every day.

**Ruchiraketu:** I suppose we need to strike a balance between regimentation in the pejorative sense, and again common practise.

**Satyaloka:** A healthy routine.

**Ruchiraketu:** I have had the sense in some places, it has been regimented rather than an expression of some sort of collective vision.

**S:** If you have no healthy routine I think you can feel very dispersed.

**Kuladitya:** I think in our case we have been exploring in our chapter meetings a bit the idea of that routine overlapping more. So we try to encourage the elements of the routine that we have in common to strengthen our sense of, I suppose in a way, the positive group of Windhorse. Of the whole mandala. And we have been trying to give more weight to that.

**S:** Also there is the element of collective practice as, broadly speaking, all the chapters meeting on Sunday evenings. I know that there are a few that don't. But that is our aim as it were, that at least in Britain everybody at least should meet at the same time. They do their monthly metta bhavana at the same time. And quite apart from just chapter meetings, [there's] Regional and National Order Weekends. That's an element of ritual there, in the sense that Lalitavajra mentioned. Well even reporting in to Shabda; you sit down and do it regularly every month. But as I say, I personally find I can do more, I am more productive, when I am functioning in that sort of way. When I was talking about [my life in Kalimpong] with the lads at Padmaloka, they were quite surprised that I hadn't had a very regular life-style there, apart from the morning and evening puja, and meditation. My writing was constantly interrupted by visitors, guests. I never felt it then, but I couldn't function like that now. Maybe when you are young you are more resilient. [In Kalimpong I would] maybe write for half an hour, then have to stop and talk to a visitor for an hour, then get back to my writing, then talk to somebody else. Then I would have to go out and come back to do a bit more writing. That's how it went, that's how I wrote *'the Survey'*. But I couldn't do it now, I'm sure I couldn't.

**Satyaloka:** [After] hearing Dhardo Rimpoche's example [from Suvajra's book], who also lived quite a structured life, I thought maybe that is what gurus did. They had their, they liked their routine. He certainly seemed to have had quite a strict routine.

**S:** Well the Buddha had a routine didn't he. A daily routine and a yearly routine, you know travelling around from centre to centre. I think apparently the last eighteen years of his life he always spent the rainy season at Sravasti. So three or four months in Sravasti, and then the rest of the time he seemed to have two sort of circuits. Modern scholars have traced (them). Or maybe three.

There is a big circuit and a little circuit of cities and towns and villages. They were just a walking distance from each other. Well you do the same thing on the vans perhaps. (laughter)

**Vasubandhu:** I was just thinking of my favourite calls.

**S:** Favourite tea shops, favourite five star hotels. (laughter) So regularity means in a way rhythm. There is a rhythm in your life. I think a rhythm is a healthy thing, because biologically we are embodiments of so many different systems of rhythms. The rhythm of our breathing and our heart beat, of night and day, sleeping and waking. Our whole life is based on those sort of rhythms. The rhythm of the seasons. But I think when there is a certain amount of rhythm in our lives, and rhythm also in the sense of routine, or even ritual, there is a very positive feeling. The rhythm of mealtimes; you feel better if you have your meals at regular times I'm sure. It is better for the digestion I'm sure, rather than just snatching a bite, or even a good meal, according to convenience. That is not really very good for you, not good for your stomach. I always have breakfast at half past seven, lunch at one o'clock, and supper at six. Although I think that is not always possible for everybody. But I think that it is good if you can have regular mealtimes, regular bedtimes. Again without becoming regimented, and allowing a bit of leeway for the odd concert or film, when you go to bed a bit later than usual. Or even a spot of TV watching. (mild laughter)

**Ratnaketu:** Shock horror.

**S:** Well I don't want to give the impression that I am being puritanical, or repressive, or anything like that. Or authoritarian.

**Vajraketu:** Well if you want your lunch on time we will have to stop.

**S:** Yes, no objection.

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### **End of Session Three**

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### **Session Four**

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**Ruchiraketu:** One of these (questions) is just a follow on. You said something yesterday which we have lost now on the tape, which was to do with making a distinctive contribution in terms of Right Livelihood, linking up Team Based Right Livelihood with Kalyana Mitrata, dana, ethics and Insight.

Some of us would like to talk more about the arising of Insight, (in) the way you were talking about that the other day. Also the question of Kalyana Mitrata and team work, if you have anything to say about that. The use of Western models.. This includes Western philosophy or management models.

**S:** Of course I don't know anything about management models.

**Ruchiraketu:** Just in case you have any comments on us using them. Even an area that we have touched on already, the whole attitude to money. Almost the idea of money, well capitalism even. This almost philosophical milieu that we're...

**S:** This is what I have asked Kulananda, to look into this a little bit. An area that I don't have a particular knowledge of. Well I can obviously see its importance, and well I read the papers, and I see sometimes frauds and financial scandals on an enormous scale. It's staggering the last three or four years, the scandals that [there] have been. And the amount of mismanagement, all that sort of thing. But I don't really understand all the ins and outs of it. I suspect there is surely something that at least some of us need to understand and to go into, and try to assess from a Dharmic point of view.

**Vajraketu:** Are we going into this now or are we (word unclear) around.

**Ruchiraketu:** So what I have said so far is this area of Insight, and this relation between Insight, work and samatha. Kalyana Mitrata and teamwork is another topic. The use of Western models, thought etc. A question about the mythic dimension of work, this is in relation to the say, work as the Tantric Guru. In one of your Padmasambhava Day talks years ago you talked about the banks and so forth being like the modern expression of Tarpa Nagpo. Again this might relate to the whole idea of money, and how we relate to it. And finally the issue of allocating resources between Windhorse and the rest of the Movement where conflicts arise, say [between] people within Windhorse [and] other demands on them from the rest of the Movement. That's five topics.

**S:** Well with regard to some of them, I think you need to say where you weren't clear, because on some of these topics, like Kalyana Mitrata, I've said so much. I would have thought that [it] was, so to speak, fairly obvious where that fitted in the Team Based Right Livelihood situation. Well if there is any point which isn't clear we can go into it.

**Ruchiraketu:** I think in that particular case again we've already touched on it in talking about collective practice and common practice, and that sort of thing.

**S:** Well mutual supportiveness in the work situation, and covering for one another when necessary. That leads onto something which connects with the arising of Insight, though in a way that people don't usually think of it as connecting. When you put another person's convenience before your own, well that is a sort of small sacrifice of selfhood, and to that extent there is, not exactly an experience of Insight, but you are certainly preparing the way for that. Let's say when you just stand in for somebody, perhaps at some personal inconvenience, or perhaps at a great deal of personal inconvenience, but you do it willingly, even though at the same time (there is) a sort of resistance from the more unregenerate part of yourself. Well that is certainly paving the way for the development of Insight, because Insight is not just a sort of conceptual thing, it is something that you experience in your life, and in ordinary terms, well it is connected with what we speak of as unselfishness, selfless behaviour. Because Insight is insight into egolessness, into sunyata.

So it is all very well to talk about sunyata and developing Insight in connection with meditation, but if you can't just put aside your self interest for the sake of your friend, even in a small way, then you are not very near to the development of Insight. So I think there is quite a connection between the development of Insight in this more existential way, and spiritual friendship when you have to make sacrifices for the friend. Or what may appear [to be] sacrifices, though you may not experience them in that way. Well

giving way to someone... I have sometimes noticed that some people have the strongest feelings in connection with the most insignificant things. It's as though they feel, well it is insignificant, [so] they can afford to express their preferences strongly.

**Ruchiraketu:** I have wondered here also if people can learn communication skills and so forth, like how to negotiate with people. Rather than just expressing their preferences, actually being able to take other people into account and so on.

**S:** Well there must be a genuine taking into account. It mustn't just be tactical and diplomatic.

**Ruchiraketu:** Right. I'm thinking that could lead to the development... Even because it involves taking different perspectives, not just the perspective that one is in in that moment, and that could even begin to form the basis of, well certainly of integration.

**S:** Well I am thinking more specifically in terms of sacrificing a pleasure, or a preference, or even a genuine interest for the sake of your friend. So that implies a degree of self abnegation.

**Vajraketu:** Would you see any qualitative difference between that self abnegation and one where you sacrificed your self interest to, what we call the objective situation.

**S:** Well in a sense it would be because you would be able to see objectively the need of your friend, perhaps see his need as greater than yours, and therefore be able to sacrifice yourself, your need, or your interest to that, or to him.

**Satyaloka:** Could it be to the business?

**S:** Well even if it is to the business, the business is people, and the business is for the sake of people, so I think that's part of what I am trying to say, is that we mustn't think of the development of Insight just in abstract conceptual terms, unrelated to life. Well the test of whether you've really developed Insight is that you behave selflessly. That is the crucial test. So if you are able to behave selflessly, especially in relation to your friend, starting at the easy end of the spectrum, well the chances are that you may have developed a measure of Insight. But if even in small ways you can't sort of sacrifice your own interest. You're very remote from anything of the nature of Insight.

So I see the development of Insight and the development of a deeper experience of Kalyana Mitrata as quite closely related. I think [that] Kalyana Mitrata, especially in the work situation where the pressures are greater, [is] definitely at the very least helpful to the development of Insight... Well let's say the Insight experience, or that experience of selflessness which, when expressed in conceptual terms, is understood as a form of Insight.

**Kuladitya:** Why do you make that distinction?

**S:** Well I am just saying that the conceptual isn't everything.

**Kuladitya:** Right, so you are experiencing the act of experiencing.

**S:** You are experiencing the real thing. Whether conceptualised or not.

**Ruchiraketu:** I mean again also on quite a practical level I think there is the whole question of covering each other's blind spots as it were. So like in any team, usually people have got particular preferences and styles of perception and so on, and through communicating with one another, through teams, again people can arrive at a more rounded picture.

**S:** It also arises in the teaching situation when you are supporting someone. I've said that it is a good spiritual practise to support someone, and to devote yourself just to making it easier for that person to lead in that group situation. Being thoughtful so that he, or she for that matter, doesn't have to think about anything except just teaching or leading the meditation or puja or whatever it is. And if that person makes any mistake, just covering for them, smoothing things over and supporting them silently all the time. And that is quite a good spiritual practise, especially if you are more accustomed to being in the leading position.

**Keturaja:** There seems to be a strong element of service.

**S:** Yes indeed.

**Keturaja:** Which I think is a very good aspect of Right Livelihood.

**Satyaloka:** There is a sense with the team, that if you think in terms of a team, you are thinking of a bigger unit than yourself. You are talking of sacrificing for a friend... If you are thinking in terms of a team, and a team is operating as a team, you do what you need to do for the team to succeed. There is a sense in which that... Sometimes the ways that we talk about the meetings that we have, that the team is engaged with, is a period of reflection for the team as a whole. The team is involved in action, working say in the shop, and then they have a team meeting, which is almost like a period of reflection, reflecting on that activity. But they are doing it together as a collectivity, not sort of individually. They are collectively reflecting on how they sort of go about things.

**S:** Anyway I just wanted to make that connection between the development of Insight, or at least preparing the ground for the development of insight, and spiritual friendship, especially within the team based work situation.

With regard to this question of myth, it did sort of occur to me that you can't sort of manufacture myths. They have to develop and arise. You can't say "let's have a myth". What is there if you did have a myth? You probably wouldn't be aware of it. It would be taken so much for granted. You'd be living it out.

**Aparimana:** Is there an advantage of making them more conscious do you think?

**S:** I'm not sure about that. I suppose it depends on what you mean by making it conscious. Perhaps if you are too conscious that you are living out a myth, it ceases to be a myth, it becomes something else.

**Ratnaketu:** Is it connected with Gestalt?

**S:** Oh dear this is getting a bit complicated. (mild laughter)

**Ruchiraketu:** The distinction that we have made in the meetings before, Bhante, has been between management and leadership, and leadership has more to do with myth, and with emotion and vision. It's not so much to do with managing step by step manoeuvre.

**S:** Management is more the mechanics of the business.

**Ruchiraketu:** Exactly. And sometimes we actually divide our meetings into separate sections so that we can change mode, because we have discovered a tendency to try to manage some sort of inspiration, which is mechanically producing inspiring ideas. Which just doesn't work. And I think maybe in that sense, one can't manufacture myth. It takes quite a different approach. It needs more evoking, rather than something thought through or pursued too directly.

**Kuladitya:** But then again, there does seem to be an issue for quite a few people about managing to be

really emotionally engaged with the work, moved with more of their being than just their rational side. It might be that people can go and do lots of pujas to parody a little bit, or get in touch with emotional inspiration through doing pujas and contacting the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, but don't feel they can experience that side of themselves, of the spiritual side, at work. So an apparent conflict is set up. Do you have any comments on how we can overcome that?

**S:** Well I suppose you have got to have a strong feeling, among other things, for the objective for which you are working. Keep that strongly in view. I mean for instance if one of your objectives is making money for the Movement, well you have got to call that strongly into view. Imagine the buildings that are going to go up in India and all that sort of thing. I must say that I still don't see quite where myth comes in. Even talking about myth doesn't seem quite real. People often talk about their personal myth, and very often I just don't know what they mean. I might have used the expression myself years and years ago.

**Vajraketu:** It's come back to haunt you.

**S:** I think perhaps the personal myth is just the deeper pattern that you eventually come to perceive in your life, as you reflect on it and look back over it.

**Ruchiraketu:** I remember you talking before about how some people might tend to think of life in terms of a battle or a riddle, or sort of basic organisations like that.

**S:** So how do you think of Windhorse Trading then?

**Ruchiraketu:** Well I know sometimes it is certainly a battle, (laughter) sometimes it is a riddle.

**S:** Well there you are! Your myth is the heroic myth. Fighting, wrestling with the dragon of capitalism.

**Ruchiraketu:** Extracting the jewels.

**S:** I suppose that you have actually got to feel that, to feel that capitalism is a dragon. It's not just a pretty figure of speech.

**Satyaloka:** Maybe it does come back to imagination. We were talking yesterday about Dharma Publishing and their end product quite of itself quite inspirational, quite inspiring. We don't have that, it's much more prosaic what we... We have gift...

**S:** You do have an end product; I mentioned the buildings that might go up in India, which you have actually been the means of creating.

**Satyaloka:** Right. So it is making that sort of connection.

**Kuladitya:** Some people have suggested having pictures of what we have achieved, pictures of Bhante's trip to America for instance, pictures of some of the books like that *Wisdom Beyond Words*, which we have had a hand in helping that.

**S:** In Newsreel Number Five, there was some reference to the fact that it was Windhorse Trading that had financed my trip to America. I think Mokshapriya actually mentioned that. It's not exactly mythical but it does help. (laughter)

**Ruchiraketu:** Yes there is a little reference at the front of "*Wisdom Beyond Words*" as well, saying that we supported Jinananda.

**Kuladitya:** But to help people make the connection with that stuff... It is not always that easy to be aware



of the end product, of where the dana is going, when you are in the middle of packing boxes or hassling with the bank manager. One tends to just see the work in front of one.

**S:** Well perhaps you need reminders around in the office, framed photographs and things like that.

**Ratnaketu:** We have put a picture of the Maha Bodhi temple at Buddha Gaya on our warehouse shrine. Because that is our major project for the next two years.

**S:** Well to go back to this question of the myth, I think the myth is something implicit in what you're actually doing. I mean there is a myth already. It is not a question of finding a myth. The fact that you are living and working, there is a myth there implicit, but you have to discover it.

**Ruchiraketu:** Would it be appropriate to talk of the myth of the New Society?

**S:** That might make it a bit illusory. (laughter) Well if it is just a myth.

**Ruchiraketu:** Well no I don't mean in that sense, but more in the sense that we have been speaking.

**S:** I suppose yes, if you see the new society is implicit in the little seeds that we are planting now.

**Ruchiraketu:** Right, yes. I'm thinking of a myth as something that organises metaphors, like the way we think about what we are doing. I know for example there was a time when, quite recently, when we had quite a lot of orders to get out. People started to speak about it in terms of a battle. This is a battle, and we have got to really fight this battle. A lot of military...

**S:** Is it a myth or is it a metaphor?

**Ruchiraketu:** Oh no it is a metaphor.

**Ruchiraketu:** But I am thinking that the myth might actually organise all the metaphors as well. So if we are starting to talk about

creating ideal conditions and so forth, perhaps if we search around in our metaphors, we will find what the myth is.

**S:** Maybe.

**Kuladitya:** Because a myth is a story isn't it, in a sense. A story we tell ourselves about what we are doing. So it is more than isolated metaphors isn't it. And in a way the story can't be that we run a gift business, and we buy things and we sell them.

**S:** Well maybe you should tell the story, the story of Windhorse Trading. See if there is a myth implicit.

**Kuladitya:** There is also the myth of the individuals involved. Someone was talking to me about this. The individuals in the business have as it were a story attached to them which perhaps we could plug into more.

**Vajraketu:** We do accumulate a mythic history don't we.

**Ruchiraketu:** Such as?

**Kuladitya:** The British Home Stores incident. (laughter) That was a great battle wasn't it.

**Ruchiraketu:** Isn't that using myth in a different sense though?

**Kuladitya:** It brings it down a bit, but maybe there are stages or gradations.

**Ruchiraketu:** I know a sense of something that I experience quite often, and I find quite a meaningful way of engaging with what I am doing, is that this is a training for something else. Now I don't mean that as a way to not appreciate what's actually happening now. But it gives it a much bigger context. This is all a training for something even greater which is coming later. And you know in that way I think of the team meetings as being forerunners of chapter meetings, and that kind of thing.

**S:** And forerunners of Olympian gatherings. (laughter) Because who is Zeus, who is Apollo, who is Venus?

**Satyaloka:** Who is Dionysius?

**S:** Anyway lets pass on from myth, there were two or three other topics.

**Ruchiraketu:** Well there is this other area of using Western ideas. I know that you have said that you are not familiar with management models and so on. But even behind the management models there are Western attitudes I suppose. Already we have talked a bit about the difference say between the Indian attitude to work, and the Western attitude to work. But I was wondering if you had any ideas about what might be implicit in the whole business of the market place that we are so busily engaged in, and what kind of...

**S:** Well I think of market place in quite simple, not to say primitive terms. It's a place where you exchange goods.

**Vajraketu:** But for example just a few minutes ago you were using the terms capitalist or capitalism. It seemed almost synonymous with a negative definition. I personally don't feel quite so strongly about it. But also there are aspects of the way that we organise ourselves which I would have said were capitalist. Like for example we try to maximise profits, within ethical and certain other constraints. Within ethical constraints...

**S:** Well I think probably capitalism proper doesn't recognise any such constraints judging by some of the cases or examples one reads about in the papers.

**Vajraketu:** But nevertheless one could take a different model, and we could decide, when we buy things and we sell them, we try and sell them for as much as we think we can get for them. Rather than for what we think is a reasonable profit to make on that particular item for example.

**S:** What is reasonable anyway? How does one determine that? I'm not sure that I even understand what money is. What is money? How does interest work? How is it that money should breed money? It seems to me all mysterious, or even mythical.

**Keturaja:** You do mention this point in your interview with Golden Drum. The Twenty Five Years interview with Nagabodhi. You specifically say that it would be interesting to explore money, its meaning and function.

**S:** I wish somebody would, yes. I don't really have time to do this. It's not something I am not interested in.

**Keturaja:** You also say in that interview, just before that, you think our Right Livelihoods are still very much in the old society.

**S:** Well it cannot but be.

**Keturaja:** I just wondered whether you had any?.. (What) are the next steps, in terms of our Right Livelihoods, to move more to the New Society?

**S:** That may be so. I don't think we will be able to do that, if we do it at all, without understanding better, more clearly, what money is and how it works? Especially how credit works.

**Satyaloka:** Well do you mean on a philosophic level or a practical level?

**S:** Both.

**Satyaloka:** Well I think we understand how it works on a practical level.

**S:** It goes back to the question of labour also, doesn't it. Work, work in the sense of labour.

**Keturaja:** Subhuti seemed to touch on this a bit in his talk on the convention. He was talking about democracy, and he was talking about money, and the right to buy. We think that if we have got money we have a right to those goods, and we don't think about the consequence of buying.

**S:** Well this is connected with this whole idea of rights. As I have said, I don't regard rights as an ethical concept, though it may be a legal one.

**Keturaja:** It seems like quite an area that does need to be gone into.

**S:** So at present we are operating within the capitalist system, for want of a better term, but without really understanding it, certainly so far as I am concerned. We operate in it to our own benefit as best we can in the light of our own ideals, but we don't really understand that dragon. Perhaps we are not even sure that it is a good dragon or a bad dragon, because there are good dragons too.

**Kuladitya:** We don't want to slay it before we knew that it was bad, I suppose.

**S:** Or kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.

**Ruchiraketu:** I think as long as we are working in traditional areas as it were, like meditation practice and so on, we have got traditional texts to draw on, [but] I think this becomes more of an issue for us when we are moving into new ground as it were, because what do we draw on?

**S:** That's true. Well we try to connect up with basic Buddhist principles, and apply those within these new areas. Well non - exploitation for instance, and generosity.

**Ruchiraketu:** I wonder if one of the... In the *'Ten Pillars'* you were talking about, in exploring anything that wasn't as it were traditionally Buddhist, that we should always explore those areas in the light of the traditional Dharma. I'm thinking here of the section on Right View.

**S:** Well, in the light of the Dharma. Well in a way how else would one explore?

**Ruchiraketu:** So it's not that being in those areas was as it were unskilful per se..

**S:** Not necessarily. You may discover, in the light of the Dharma, that it is. Perhaps you don't know that yet, you haven't directed the light of the Dharma on those areas sufficiently.

**Ruchiraketu:** I mean I can think of an example of something that sometimes happens, with new teams especially, is that we encourage them to think about their goals. We have got particular methods to encourage people to become clear about their goals. And they say "Oh, this isn't the Dharma".

**S:** Then one has to assess or restate what you mean by the Dharma.

**Ruchiraketu:** But it is almost as if, if it hasn't come out of a traditional Buddhist text or a scripture or something that, people don't have the same kind of confidence in it. Maybe rightly so, that they are cautious.

**S:** Yes, it is right to be cautious, obviously.

**Kuladitya:** And because you can't necessarily directly quote Bhante. There are some [areas, for example money and finance], and perhaps [this area of] team-work, [where] you might have only just touched on the barest principles, and a lot of the exploration will be down to us...

**S:** ... the application...

**Kuladitya:** ... so we haven't necessarily got the stamp of your authority firmly all over it (laughter) if you see what I mean.

**S:** You'll have to borrow my stamp obviously. (laughter) Well Bhante knows his limitations, it's as simple as that. He's not going to step outside them. If you ask me about the arts, maybe I can speak with a certain amount of confidence, but business and money... No, it's an area I view with some suspicion, because I am not on my home ground then. In some cases I can see where Dharmic principles might be applicable. But the whole field is so vast and complex, one would have to study it fairly thoroughly before one started trying to apply one's Dharmic principles.

**Kuladitya:** Yes it's a bit like we've plunged into that area, and [are] having to work out how to apply the Dharmic principles to some extent as we go along.

**S:** Well there are certainly principles you can apply like honesty, truthfulness, spiritual friendship, non-exploitation. Well you may be trying to get quite undharmic principles to work in a Dharmic way. You may find that. Or you may have to find a more skilful way of doing that.

**Kuladitya:** Profit motive doesn't seem to harm too many people's spiritual lives does it? It's interesting the number of people who, at first sight, resist making money or making profit as if there was something dirty or tainted.

**S:** Well perhaps this is just a left over from the English class system, where even down until the last century, to be in trade and making money was not respectable. The gentry lived off their income, which was ultimately from land. This comes out for instance in Jane Austen's novels. You remember 'Pride and Prejudice' where Elizabeth is at first ashamed that she has an uncle in trade. She is quite relieved when he is talking in a gentlemanly like sort of way with her fiancé, so that she doesn't have to be ashamed of him, because he is in trade. I think there is a bit of a leftover from that. The gentleman is not one who sullies his hands with trade. He spends money yes, but he doesn't earn it. If you've earned money, it is something that you are ashamed of.

If you spend what you have inherited, that is not anything to be ashamed of. I think those attitudes still lie at the back of our thinking in this country, some of our feeling. Well even in the States, that home of democracy and equality, they talk about old money and new money don't they. Old money doesn't mix with new money. Old money meaning money that was made in the last century, new money - money that was made in this century. Old money doesn't marry new money, usually.

**Vajraketu:** Nouveau Riche is a pejorative term, well in this country. (I) don't know whether they use it in America.

**S:** You could even say, being a bit cynical, that you're Nouveau Riche, for the first ten million. (laughter)  
After that all is forgiven. (laughter)

**Keturaja:** We've got some way to go.

**S:** So we need to study a lot more in this field, and perhaps the people who are actually doing the work are not in the best position to study. For one thing they probably just don't have the time. I would like to see some of our friends exploring the theory of all this, the implications.

**Aparimana:** Do you have any ideas where one might start looking?

**S:** I suppose one would start with orthodox economics. If I was to explore the field myself I would probably start with Adam Smith, and just feel my way from there. 'The wealth of nations'. But economics has been called the dismal science hasn't it.

**Aparimana:** It is! (mild laughter)

**S:** Well maybe turn to the poets, you know what Shakespeare has to say about gold, yellow glistening gold. Or Ben Johnson. (pause)

**Ruchiraketu:** So inasmuch as we are in new territory as it were, we are going to find ourselves relying on non-traditional models anyway. I'm thinking here again of management models and teamwork models, and even economic models.

**S:** Not necessarily. Because you can look in the Vinaya Pitaka. How did the bhikkhus manage their affairs? There is a lot of information there. Not maybe their financial affairs, but their affairs in general.

**Satyaloka:** But they won't tell you how to run a gift shop, how to run a team that runs a gift shop. I mean you may get again general principles of how a collectivity of monks organises itself.

**S:** But you only need general principles, then a certain amount of common sense, to apply them to your own situation.

**Vasubandhu:** We have got to write our own Vinaya haven't we really. We have got to write our own rules.

**S:** You've got the principles, so you write your own rules.

**Kuladitya:** In Cambridge a lot of this has been implicit and as we've, in the last few years, expanded out, we are having to make the application of the principles more explicit. And it is a new thing for us still, and so we are not used to doing it so much. I think that might be part of the issue.

**Satyaloka:** Well I don't know that principles are just enough for most people. I think in what we do with the team, is spelling out the connection between the principles and the practice. That does seem to be the area that we can offer a lot of help in, a lot of clarity in. Okay you have got your Buddhist ideals, you've got your principles, you've got speech precepts, you've got Kalyana Mitrata, but how do you actually focus that in a way that you can use in a situation? I think application of principles is an area we are involved in.

**S:** I mean in some cases it is obvious. If you take for instance Kalyana Mitrata, and you are working with someone, how are you a friend? In what way do you behave so as to be a friend? It seems in a way pretty obvious. It is not as though one is confronted by very difficult problems or casuistry for instance.

**Satyaloka:** Well taking that example when you have people in a team who are working. Sometimes the issue comes up that, well we don't work in the same place. We work in very different areas of the shop. How do you build a sense of team? Well you could say that there is Kalyana Mitrata there. But you have to draw out some of the implications of.. Well you can think of yourself as a team, you can experience yourself as a team, without working next to each other all the time. There is a way of thinking in that sort of way. **S:** You presumably discover these things by looking, trying to see, experience, and so on. I don't think you can deduce them logically from the principle.

**Kuladitya:** So it's to some extent a [process of] trial and error, we act and we observe.

**S:** Not just a blind trial and error, because if you just look at the situation you can usually tell which methods are more likely to succeed.

**Kuladitya:** But we are going to be going through a period of trying to apply the principles, finding X doesn't work so...

**S:** Well it doesn't work sufficiently.

**Kuladitya:** So it isn't necessarily going to be a very clean or straightforward process. Did you find this with setting up the Movement?

**S:** I didn't really think about it in that sort of way.

**Kuladitya:** So how did you think about it?

**S:** Well looking back I don't think I did, I just sort of did it. (laughter) I didn't think about it too much. Unless it's so long ago that I have forgotten. I certainly didn't agonize over it.

**Kuladitya:** I suppose the single sex issue...

**S:** That was forced on me as it were. One couldn't help noticing that people were so much better and more positive, and had a better retreat, in that sort of situation. It wasn't something I thought up beforehand at all. Far from it.

**Kuladitya:** So you tried as it were one model.

**S:** No I didn't try it, I assumed. Because everything in the West was mixed, I just took it for granted that we'd just do everything mixed.

**Kuladitya:** Didn't you even think about it?

**S:** Didn't think about it. (pause) Just to go back for a minute to this question of money. The sort of thing that puzzles me for instance is well, take the question of interest. So you put some money in the bank and you get say ten percent interest. Where does that money come from? Because nobody has done any extra work so to speak. So how is it that that money just lying in the bank sort of gave birth to one tenth of itself?

**Vajraketu:** Well it hasn't, because the bank has lent it to us, at twelve percent, and we've spent it on...

**Kuladitya:** We've used it to try and earn fifty percent I suppose, didn't we. We could say our twelve percent goes to the bank, and the bank can then give the ten percent to the lender. Somewhere along the line the money is being used for value-added activity. If it isn't, then I think you do get a hole in the middle.

**S:** Well supposing a government decrees there shall be ten billion more pounds in circulation? Well that happens sometimes. Where does it come from? They print currency?

**Ratnaketu:** Then the value of the currency goes down. There is more of it about, but you can't buy as much with it.

**S:** Does that always happen?

**Aparimana:** Pretty much yes.

**Ratnaketu:** If they put in a sufficient amount, it has to have that effect.

**Kuladitya:** Good examples are the Russians, the Germans and the Italians. So people had to go shopping with wheelbarrows full of money didn't they.

**S:** Well then why did they do that? Why do they print those high denominations, if that is all that happens?

**Ratnaketu:** Well in Russia they are doing that at the moment because the State owes state workers wages, and they don't have the money to pay them..

**S:** So they give them money.

**Ratnaketu:** So they print some and give it to them. Then the workers get upset. Because even though they have been given the money, overnight the money is worth less, because there is so much more of it about.

**S:** So they are in the same position as they were.

**Ratnaketu:** Well now it is the problem of the workers rather than... (laughter)

**Vasubandhu:** Well apparently in some places in East Europe, it is better to order two drinks, because if you order one and drink it, when you order the next one it's gone up by a quarter. (loud laughter) It's ridiculous. Thousands of percent. They always recommend buy two at once.

**Ruchiraketu:** That sounds like a drinkers' nightmare. (laughter)

**S:** Drinkers have nightmares anyway.

**Ruchiraketu:** But money is a sort of idea, as well as a source of confidence. I was reading this story about some tribe where they used these stones with a ring, with a sort of hole in them, as a form of currency. One of them was worth a goat or something like this. And they were taking this boat across the bay, and somebody dropped the stone down the bottom of the bay. But they were still using it to buy and sell things, even though it wasn't there, because [they would say] "I'll give you the stone out in the middle of the bay for that goat" and so on. They were still continuing trading, even though they didn't have a clue where the stone was, because it is not actually the stone that is the money, it's the agreement.

**Satyaloka:** The plastic card is not the money. You don't ever get back to the money in some ways,

because of electronic transactions.

**Vasubandhu:** It's got on the note 'I promise to pay the bearer' and all that.

**Kuladitya:** That's not the money though is it.

**S:** But actually I think no bank could do that now.

**Ratnaketu:** Well what they used to have was the gold standard, where you used to be able to claim the gold. But they have now legally removed that completely.

**Vajraketu:** Well I doubt if we are going to get to the root to the philosophical meaning of money this evening.

**S:** Well I asked Kulananda about this, he said "oh it's just confidence".

**Ruchiraketu:** Confidence that that stone is out there and we'll get a goat for it.

**S:** I just remembered that in ancient Greece, in Sparta, their lawkeeper decreed that money should be in enormous iron bars. You had to use a wheel barrow to transport it, and that inhibited commercial transaction, which was his idea.

**Kuladitya:** It's interesting, because it is completely the opposite way now in the West isn't it. Everything is done to facilitate financial transaction.

**S:** His idea was to make it as difficult as possible, unlike Athens which did develop as it were commercially. (pause)

**Ruchiraketu:** Well I think we have covered most of these topics, haven't we.

**Satyaloka:** I wonder if we can come back to the topic of Insight from a different angle. I wonder if we can return to the model which you first spoke about. It struck me it was one of intensity. Whereas perhaps the model of dhyana and vipassana, on the basis of dhyana, is maybe one of depth. So I was thinking of an image that Kamalasila uses in his book is of laying a jewel on a beautiful cushion, a beautiful piece of cloth. It's almost like your refined consciousness just has an aesthetic appreciation of the jewel of the truth. Or sometimes the image is used of a lake, and dropping a stone into a lake. Whereas what you were talking about was one more of intensity, which struck me more like a rock and a flint, say striking and creating a spark. And I was just thinking practically about the example you gave of reflecting in the moment. You were talking about being in an existential situation, and then bringing to bear a Dharmic thought. In connection with that I was wondering, in a way, how to do that? I think I have done that. You do come up very [strongly against the] frustrations of samsara trying to do what we are doing. You put your energy into something, you want it to happen. It doesn't happen. And to a degree I do reflect "oh well that is the nature of samsara". But that doesn't produce Insight.

**S:** I don't think there is a 'how'. I was thinking of the analogy of a serious bereavement, because it often seems to happen in connection with that. Well people do have a measure of Insight, but they don't think 'how shall I go about developing Insight in this situation?' It just happens. And I think when it happens you have to be able to recognise, "A-ha! This has happened! Let me try to deepen this, and in a sense retain this".

**Kuladitya:** So the weight of the experience itself does the job.

**S:** Supposing someone near and dear to you is about to die. You don't as it were just say to yourself 'Ah



this is a situation in which I could develop Insight'. It doesn't really happen like that. You are so caught up in the experience, and you have to allow yourself to be caught up in it. But in the midst of the experience itself, it can open up a feeling of detachment, a sense of impermanence of things, that you have got to give up everything in the end, you will have to part. And that can be an Insight experience. And when you had that you recognise that, and you try to develop it and deepen it. But clearly you will have that sort of experience, I mean if your whole life has been oriented to the Dharma usually, though sometimes it happens even in the case of people who don't have any connection with the Dharma. It's a human thing. But they may be less likely to follow it up and deepen it, if they in a sense won't be able to recognise what is happening.

Or when you have a very cruel disappointment, well you have a flash of insight. The insight is into the intensity of your own desire that something should happen, and you see the limitations of that. And you can see it, how it has led to an experience of suffering. It's an insight, and you can dwell upon that and develop it.

**Satyaloka:** That is in a way what I am interested in, the 'how'. You've given an example that life just throws up death, bereavement. In a work situation here we're looking at Insight within Right Livelihood and what sort of models might be appropriate to us developing it.

**S:** Well all the models that I have mentioned really, you know, are appropriate. Models of bereavement, disappointment..

**Kuladitya:** Presumably one area that we can work is making our connection with what we are doing strong, so that we develop the caring, so we are more likely to be disappointed when something goes wrong. I mean could you look at it like that, so the work that we have to do is really connecting with our subject matter..

**S:** But on the other hand if you are working selflessly, well you'll be less likely to be disappointed, because the Insight arises in connection with something conditioned, of your own, which you see as conditioned. But yes you will always have something of that sort there, to be disappointed or frustrated, and therefore always the possibility of Insight.

**Kuladitya:** At least until we've eradicated it all through gaining Insight.

**Satyaloka:** You talked about at least having the clarity through study of the Dharmic framework that you were going to bring to bear on that. You said that you just...

**S:** After having, as it were, that flash of Insight let's say, you'll have a framework within which to fit the Insight. It's not that the framework enables you to produce the Insight.

**Satyaloka:** Right, I think that was what I was, maybe...

**S:** The life, the existential experience, the life experience, which includes of course your previous practise of the Dharma, has brought about that experience.

**Vasubandhu:** If you have a Christian framework, it's the voice of God or something.

**S:** The will of God.

**Kuladitya:** Or it's what might make one get involved in Buddhism isn't it. I mean it's quite often that people have a great experience of disappointment which make them question, and then they go and search for something which will make sense of it, or will allow them to deal with it, don't they. So it's not that the framework has to come first. (pause)

**Aparimana:** Although I presume reflecting quite thoroughly outside of work on the kind of frustrations one normally experiences, I would have thought that something like that, some sort of outside reflection would also be helpful or beneficial.

**S:** Well presumably that one should be doing as a regular feature of one's Dharmic life anyway.

**Aparimana:** That would be a supportive condition.

**S:** Indeed, yes, yes. (pause)

**Satyaloka:** So you are saying you can't, because it was a discontinuous thing, you can't make it happen. The intensity of the experience will effect you, you then put that in a Dharmic context. But you can't bring the "ah here we are, I've just been disappointed, here I am on the phone I've just been disappointed, how can I reflect on this Dharmically?" That's what I thought you meant yesterday when you quickly bring to mind a...

**S:** Well you can do that, but I think as it were the more genuine situation, with regard to the development of Insight, is that you actually do have, at least momentarily, an experience of Insight. Insight into the real nature of the situation, and then you bring your reflection to bear upon that to deepen it and broaden it as it were. But you can reflect on any situation in a Dharmic way, intense or otherwise. But that wasn't quite what I was talking about.

**Ratnaketu:** That momentary experience of Insight, is that necessarily conceptual or intellectual?

**S:** Well the English word itself is suggesting in-sight. It is just like a seeing. It may not be accompanied by any discursive mental process. You just see, that is how it is. You just see what a fool you have been. (anguished sound) You just see it. You don't go through a whole mental process about it, thinking about it discursively. It's just blindingly obvious you've been a fool, you just see it. So it is like that.

**Kuladitya:** And feel it.

**S:** And feel it, maybe the feeling comes an instant later.

**Satyaloka:** So maybe my view of Insight, with this capital I, you're talking there about realising you've been a fool and seeing something, and it touching you. That seems quite down to earth.

**S:** But then you have to bear that in mind, [to bear in mind] that yes, I was a fool, and not let it slip away. Because once you start thinking "well no it was understandable, I'm not all that to blame, I wasn't really a fool", you lose the insight. Or you just forget about it. You remember Nietzsche's aphorism. He says something like, I think I am paraphrasing a bit, memory says "oh you did that, pride says oh no you didn't". Pride wins. You can repress it, smother it.

**Kuladitya:** Or re-write the history of it. It seems to link in with one of the sections in *'The Wisdom Beyond Words'* where you talk about Prajnaparamita humiliating us by bringing us up against reality as it were. And we need to put ourselves in situations where we are humiliated spiritually.

**S:** Where our limitations are exposed, and we can't escape from recognising them.

**Kuladitya:** That is coterminous with the beginnings of part of the stages into Insight. That sort of experience, in that it is eroding our...

**S:** Yes, an approach. Not the approach, but an approach. Well I think there are all sorts of greater and

lesser situations where there is a little bit of Insight. Well we pass it over, we allow ourselves to forget it. So we need to reflect on our own experience, and where there is a little bit of insight just try to deepen it, incorporate it, integrate it.

**Kuladitya:** Presumably part of that deepening and broadening is making connections with other parts of, other experiences in our lives. Somehow connecting that experience up.

**S:** Could be.

**Ratnaketu:** I imagine it's sometimes "yes, that really did happen".

**S:** Yes, right, convincing yourself that it really did happen. So the acceptance or the recognition that it did really happen becomes permanently embedded in your consciousness. (pause) Sometimes the powerful emotions are very instructive here. I mean a few years ago I talked about jealousy. Jealousy is one of the strongest of emotions, and also one of the most negative. So if you start experiencing very violent jealousy, it is usually experienced in the area of sexual relationships, it really tells you a lot about yourself, and it is really something to reflect upon. Because jealousy is an emotion that persists, so you have got a permanent object. You can be there for hours if not days. You can sort of [ask] "why am I feeling this?" You know, just go into it. Why this feeling of jealousy? What is at the bottom of it? What does it mean? What am I being? This can be a means of developing Insight, into yourself and therefore through yourself into reality so to speak. Or when you are very angry with someone. But jealousy is particularly good because it is a very unpleasant, painful emotion. You don't get any satisfaction out of it. You can get satisfaction out of being angry, you can't get satisfaction out of being jealous. It is just painful, and very strong. You can't ignore it.

**Ratnaketu:** So this is like Insight into the emptiness of the conditioned, of the unconditioned you know there is no...

**S:** You see the nature of ego. (gentle laughter) You see the nature of ego.

**Ratnaketu:** But then there is...

**S:** ...How strongly you are grasping, and how you feel when that grasping is frustrated. What a strong ego sense there is there. You just see it, with the help of, well dwelling on that feeling of jealousy and just look into it. So there are all sorts of opportunities of developing Insight, but we usually overlook them. Well this is assuming one has a general Dharmic background of course.

**Ratnaketu:** People in the future who have done that a lot, and how would they then move to the next level of Insight, developing insight into the...

**S:** Well you just go on deepening and deepening. You are still thinking in quite abstract sorts of terms. It doesn't really happen like that. You just go on seeing more and more clearly. (pause) But jealousy is a good one to reflect on. (gentle laughter)

**Vajraketu:** Could we go back for a moment to samatha, Bhante, and could you say something about the importance or otherwise of some experience of the dhyanas. I'm thinking quite specifically of my own case, which is, my experience of the dhyanas is infrequent and...

**S:** Well as I said, I think yesterday, the normal procedure is for Insight to arise on the basis of dhyana experience. Though the traditional practice is after experiencing higher dhyanas you go down to the first one where there is vitakka/vicara and start up reflection. But sometimes that isn't as it were dramatic enough. I think sometimes the more existential situation is more likely to provide suitable conditions for the arising of insight. It is easy to have a nice pleasant gentle dhyanic experience, not anything very

intense.

**Vajraketu:** Could one console oneself with the thought that a certain amount of horizontal integration arises from the activities one engages in, and a certain level of positivity, an increasing level of positivity, would do in the absence of tingling up the back of your neck or...

**S:** It would do, it would do. But also going to the other extreme, looking at it from a completely different point of view, one mustn't associate Insight, or the arising of Insight, just with the experience of dhyana. Sometimes Insight can arise in very painful and difficult situations, when you might feel you are going a bit crazy sort of thing.

**Vajraketu:** I'm clear about that. My understanding until recently had been that the two experiences might not be temporarily connected, but because I have had a lot of dhyana experience, when I have my intense experience I'm able to absorb it. And it has bothered me slightly over the years because I don't have hours and hours of second dhyana experience tucked away. You know when that big moment comes I will miss it. I'm being a bit literalistic.

**S:** The important factor is concentration. When one does have this as it were flash of insight, if that does arise, well one has the degree of concentration sufficient to dwell upon it quite one pointedly and absorb it in that way. That concentration may not be accompanied by other dhyana factors.

**Kuladitya:** And we may, say we've been working within the Movement, say within Right Livelihood, for years and years and not had that much experience of dhyana, but have got fairly positive and reasonably integrated... Do you think we may be concentrated enough to be able to absorb that sort of?..

**S:** Well if you are fairly well integrated, you are in a slightly dhyanic state. This is what dhyana is all about, well from a certain point of view.

**Kuladitya:** So in a way we are thinking of dhyana perhaps too much in terms of it being strictly within a meditation, sitting down on a cushion situation. We could recast it in terms of being integrated and concentrated, but outside..

**S:** Well sometimes people have insight experiences reading the scriptures, or just hearing them. Well perhaps hearing them even more so, because you are not making the effort to read, you are just so to speak passive and receptive, you just take in those words. That is especially the case if they are chanted and you understand them. So yes though the standard approach to insight is through samatha, the dhyanas, it is certainly not the only approach. Though on the whole that is the one most cultivated and developed within the Buddhist tradition. But the Zen tradition at least shows that there are alternative ways.

**Vasubandhu:** Or even the Pali Canon because I mean people meet the Buddha and click, and didn't think "Now I've got to do..."

**S:** Even the Pali Canon on the basis of strong devotion.

**Ratnaketu:** So in the same way you could, if you have a very strong positive emotion, you can look into that.

**S:** You could but it is not quite the same thing, it hasn't got the same existential edge, in a way unfortunately. When you suffer you are really up against your ego. As I have said before, people ask why do I suffer? But who asks well why am I happy? Suffering makes you think and reflect, usually happiness doesn't. If anything it makes you forgetful. Well that is the time to watch out when things are going well, and you feel happy and so on and so forth. That is when you are likely to make mistakes. You can see it

happening. People get over confident, and therefore careless, therefore they make mistakes. I apply this to the Movement generally. Now that we are being more successful, now is the time to be careful that we don't put our foot wrong, take a wrong direction. Success is more dangerous than failure. That is when Mara starts taking a real interest. Anyway I am going to go to bed very soon, so any last little point? I was hoping to lead a puja, but I think I am too tired for that, so I am going to go to bed.

**Vajraketu:** There was one last point, it might be hard to answer in the abstract, but there is our interaction with the rest of the Movement (which) does put demands on individual Order Members, and it is not always obvious how to respond. Quite often it is, but this came up recently in relation to the women Order Members I think, who work within the business... (they) probably feel it more than the men... It's the sort of issue that arises for us if say a woman Order Member wants more retreats so that she can support retreats at the new women's retreat centre for example. Then it overlaps with issues we were talking about yesterday.

**S:** But there I think, one must bear in mind that Windhorse Trading, broadly speaking, dedicates itself to the Movement as a whole, so if you detract from that in order to enable someone to contribute to a part of the Movement, however worthy, you are detracting from your main objective. Do you see what I mean? Well clearly you can't be too hard and fast about it, but that is the broad situation. But inasmuch as Windhorse Trading as a whole is concerned with the interests and support of the wider Movement, or the Movement as a whole, or matters of general concern, well the same principle will apply to the individual person working within Windhorse.

**Vajraketu:** That is pretty clear. I think that is our instinctual response. But because in a way we are right in it, it's not always obvious to us in terms of what is best for the Movement. Whether it is best for the Movement that the resources stay concentrated in Windhorse or whether...

**S:** I think my own view is it's best if they stay concentrated, because otherwise there is no end to this as it were fissiparous process. I mean every one of your workers will say I would like to support this, or I would like to support my old centre, or to go and do this, that and the other for so and so's community. But Windhorse is meant, as far as I have understood it, to make a united effort for furthering matters which are beyond the concern of individual centres as such.

**Satyaloka:** But in that particular instance you are talking about the whole women's wing of the Movement possibly. Somebody might say well Taraloka supporting those retreats is about supporting the growth of the women's side of activities. So that is quite broad.

**S:** Well you could argue analogies for everything. You could say well Padmaloka is doing the same thing for men, LBC is such a big centre, it is our biggest centre, it affects the whole Movement. You could argue that way.

**Vajraketu:** That's clear.

**S:** There was something else I was going to say, it slipped me for the moment, in this same connection. Ah yes, I was saying for instance sometimes it has been noticeable that on National Order weekends there hasn't been a very good representation from Cambridge. But then I have heard people say they must be working, if they hadn't been having to work, they would have come. People do understand so to speak. I mean they are sorry not to see you, they know quite well that you are not absent for any frivolous reason, you are absent because you have had something to do and that is for the good of the Movement as a whole.

**Vajraketu:** I had a pang of disappointment yesterday when you mentioned the program for the February Order Weekend because we have our major trade show, we always miss February Order Weekend because we have our major trade show that weekend, to miss Devamitra and Nagabodhi. I could have had

Insight if I was concentrated.

**S:** But then again they are tape recorded. You can make arrangements to get all of you together at some opportunity convenient to you, and just listen to those tapes. This is one of the advantages of modern technology. (laughter) You can afford the tapes, some centres can't. (mild laughter) You probably don't even have to think about it, just order them, simple as that. But maybe just phone beforehand and make sure they are tape recorded, and make it clear you want copies as soon as possible. Presumably that is your own man.

**Vajraketu:** Ratnaprabha lives next door so we don't have any problems..

**S:** Anyway I think I really had better go to bed.

General words of appreciation and a present is given to Bhante.

**S:** Oh that's very nice. Thank you very much. Gosh it's heavy too. (laughter)

**Satyaloka:** It's a book. (laughter) It's a book not a cake.

**Vajraketu:** And thank you very much for (words unclear), it's very much appreciated.

**S:** Thank you all for having me. So what is happening in the morning, are we off after breakfast?

#### **END OF SEMINAR**

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